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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/145 of 19 December 2006 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9, of 25 July 2006, assesses the extent to which attention to gender perspectives has been mainstreamed in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and provides recommendations for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women. The report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women (E/CN.6/2008/2).

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/145 of 19 December 2006, requested the Secretary-General to continue to report annually to the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women on the follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration[1] and Platform for Action[2] and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Assembly,[3] with an assessment of progress in gender mainstreaming, including information on key achievements, lessons learned and good practices, and to recommend further measures to enhance implementation.

2. In its resolution 2006/9 of 26 July 2006, entitled "Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women", the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, on an annual basis, a report on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes with a particular focus on the priority theme of its session, and decided that in 2008, the priority theme under consideration by the Commission would be "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women".

3. The present report, submitted in response to these resolutions, assesses progress made in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, with a particular focus on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and makes recommendations for action for the consideration of the Commission. The report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women (E/CN.6/2008/2).

4. The report incorporates an analysis of responses provided by Member States to a questionnaire distributed in preparation for the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[4] and to a note verbale (DAW/2007/006) inviting Member States to update previously submitted information or to provide the Secretariat with succinct information relating to the priority theme under consideration.[5]

II. Background

5. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are goals in and of themselves, as well as an important means of moving towards the achievement of all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium

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[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[4] Available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/english/responses.htm.

[5] Contributions were received from the Governments of Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand and Tunisia.

Development Goals. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[6] Heads of State and Government rededicated themselves to supporting all efforts to uphold the equal rights of women and men, and in paragraph 20 thereof resolved to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease, and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable.

6. In paragraph 58 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[7] Heads of State and Government, remaining convinced that progress for women was progress for all, reaffirmed that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly was an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

7. It is widely recognized that progress in achieving Millennium Development Goal 3 (promote gender equality and the empowerment of women) will lead to progress in achieving all other Millennium Development Goals. At the same time, gender-sensitive investments in all sectors, if designed and implemented appropriately and concurrently with more targeted interventions, can make significant contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment.[8]

International commitments on financing for gender equality and empowerment of women

8. Global commitments on financing for gender equality and women's empowerment have been made by Governments, including at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), the Millennium Summit (2000) and the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002), as well as in intergovernmental processes, including the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women.[9]

9. In its chapter on financial arrangements (para. 345), the Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that funding had to be identified and mobilized from all sources and across all sectors to achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women; and that, as Governments hold the primary responsibility for implementing the strategic objectives of the Platform for Action, they should make efforts to systematically review how women benefit from public sector expenditures, adjust budgets to ensure equality of access to public sector expenditures, and achieve the gender-related commitments made in other United Nations summits and conferences (para. 346). Sufficient resources should be allocated to national machineries for the advancement of women as well as to all institutions, as appropriate, that can contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action (para. 347).

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[6] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[7] See General Assembly resolution 60/1.

[8] Caren Grown and others, "The financial requirements of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment", Levy Economics Institute Working Paper, No. 47 (August 2006), paper prepared for the World Bank, p. 25.

[9] These commitments are outlined in more detail in the report of the Secretary-General on financing for gender equality and empowerment of women (E/CN.6/2008/2).

10. At its twenty-third special session, the General Assembly called on Governments to provide national machineries with the necessary human and financial resources, including through exploring innovative funding schemes, so that gender mainstreaming would be integrated into all policies, programmes and projects.[10] It further noted that limited funding at the State level made it imperative that innovative approaches to the allocation of existing resources be employed, not only by Governments but also by non-governmental organizations and the private sector. [11]

11. In addition to the more general calls for increased resources, there was the highlighting by the Platform for Action of the need for resources in undertaking specific actions to achieve the strategic objectives relating to each critical area of concern.[12] Subsequent agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women and the resolutions of other intergovernmental bodies, including the General Assembly, have called for allocation of resources for the promotion of gender equality in specific areas.[13]

12. As recently as at its fiftieth session in 2006,[14] the Commission called for mobilization of adequate funding for gender-sensitive development policies and programmes and for national machineries for the advancement of women, through national, regional and international resource mobilization and gender-responsive budget processes in all sector areas, and the allocation of adequate funding for women-specific measures.

13. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addressed the issue of financing in several of its general recommendations, including general recommendation No. 6 on "Effective national machinery and publicity",[15] which recommended that State parties provide adequate resources, commitment and authority to national machineries and mechanisms for the advancement of women. In its concluding comments, the Committee has called on States parties to allocate necessary resources to undertaking appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in various sectors and has also called on some States parties to monitor the effects of macroeconomic policies, including trade agreements, on women so as to ensure that all national development policies, plans and programmes explicitly promote women's empowerment, and to seek innovative sources of funding and assistance for the promotion of gender equality, including in partnerships with the private sector.

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[10] See General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex, para. 76 (c).

[11] Ibid., para. 36.

[12] See paras. 58 (d), 80 (f), 84 (a), 110 (a) and (b), 124 (p), 203, 279, 59 (a), 66, 85 (b), 86 (a), 109 (f) and (h), 110 (b), 147 (f), 169 (b), 170, 209, 232, 241 (a) and 245 (d).

[13] For example, the two sets of agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women and General Assembly resolution 60/210 of 22 December 2005 and all other relevant resolutions.

[14] See the agreed conclusions of the Commission on "Enhanced participation of women in development", para. 7 (n).

[15] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/43/38), chap. V; see also recommendations No. 23 on "Political and public life" (ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/52/38/Rev.1), part two, chap. I.A) and No. 24 on "Women and health" (ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/54/38), part one, chap. I.A).

The gender mainstreaming strategy

14. Gender mainstreaming was endorsed in the Platform for Action as a strategy for the promotion of gender equality and emphasized as central to addressing all critical areas of concern. Governments and other actors were called upon to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes.[16] The Platform called for the application of a dual strategy of gender mainstreaming, complemented by targeted interventions to ensure its full and effective implementation.

15. In its agreed conclusions 1997/2,[17] the Economic and Social Council clarified the principles of gender mainstreaming as a critical strategy for achieving gender equality and the guidelines for its implementation. The Council noted (tenth para.) that clear political will and the allocation of adequate and, if needed, additional human and financial resources for gender mainstreaming from all available funding sources were important for the successful translation of the concept into practice.

16. In 2000, the General Assembly called on Governments to incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all budgetary processes to promote equitable and effective resource allocations to support gender equality and development programmes that enhance women's empowerment.[18]

17. At the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government reiterated the importance of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality, and to that end undertook to actively promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres.[19]

18. Efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, whether through the gender mainstreaming strategy or through targeted interventions for women, require financial resources. Despite a growing body of evidence demonstrating that gender equality makes good economic sense, and the calls for gender mainstreaming in economic and public finance processes, adequate resources have not been systematically allocated.

III. Initiatives undertaken at national level on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

19. In the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action in 2000, a lack of resources was noted by Member States in all regions as an obstacle to implementation.[20] The 10-year review and appraisal in 2005 indicated that in many countries domestic and external resources remained insufficient.[21]

20. The examples of initiatives by Member States on financing for gender equality and women's empowerment in the following section are not comprehensive but

[16] See paras. 79, 123, 141, 164, 187, 202, 229, 238, 252 and 273.

[17] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1 and Add.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

[18] See General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex, para. 73 (b).

[19] See General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 59.

[20] See E/CN.6/2000/PC/2 and corrigenda, para. 108.

[21] See E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1, para. 736.

serve to illustrate the types of activities carried out at national level to ensure allocation of resources to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.[22]

A. Public finance management, including gender-responsive budgeting

21. Sound and equitable public finance management can ensure that resources are allocated to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The way in which Governments generate and spend revenue can have differentiated impacts on women and girls and men and boys. These impacts may be determined, for example, by the manner in which public goods and services are provided or income is distributed.[23]

22. Public finance reforms in many countries have introduced results-based budgeting, with a focus on performance management and outputs and outcomes. Shifts away from annual budget cycles to multi-year expenditure frameworks are common in such reforms. These shifts offer opportunities to initiate gender-responsive budgeting processes, which mainstream gender perspectives into budgets and link resource allocations to gender equality commitments.[24]

23. Through the use of a Medium-term Expenditure Framework, Cambodia, for example, is establishing programme-based budgets which provide a logical framework for gender-responsive budgeting. The Philippines recognized the need to operationalize its gender and development budget within the context of ongoing public expenditure management reforms.

24. Analysis of public finance from a gender perspective can lead to more gender-responsive public finance management. Honduras reported that attention to gender perspectives in the Central Government's Programme of Public Investment led to increased attention to gender equality in public finance management.

25. Analyses designed to determine resource needs and financing gaps at national level are important tools for generating resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women.[25] The 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action indicated that gender-responsive budgeting initiatives were increasingly used as a mechanism for mainstreaming gender perspectives into public finance (see, for example, the responses of Indonesia, New Zealand, Morocco, Norway, Namibia, Barbados, Botswana, Malaysia, the Czech Republic, Guatemala, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam).[26]

26. Many such efforts, however, have not been systematic and most initiatives were at an initial stage.[27] Most gender-responsive budgeting initiatives to date have

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[22] Unless otherwise noted, country examples are drawn from responses received to note verbale DAW/2007/006, available at www.un.org/daw.

[23] See report of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women", 4-7 September 2007, Oslo (EGM/FFGE/2007/REPORT).

[24] Ibid.

[25] Grown and others, loc. cit., p. 26.

[26] See the responses to a questionnaire for the 10-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action, available at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/english/responses.htm.

[27] See E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1, para. 736.

focused on the expenditure side of the budget.[28] Member States reported on methods and tools used to assess expenditures from a gender perspective. Australia, for example, used indicators to measure performance of women-specific programmes through annual budget statements, and conducted performance reviews throughout the budget cycle. Mexico's 2007 budget included provisions for the generation of information and indicators of results disaggregated by sex, in order to measure differentiated impact.

27. Some Member States did report initiatives to analyse revenues from a gender perspective. Belgium, for example, established a committee of experts to draft a report on direct and indirect discrimination in the application of personal income tax. Austria carried out a study on the gender perspectives of its tax system. Spain included provisions for analysis of public taxes, rates, and prices in a plan on gender equality in public administration.

28. To fully institutionalize and sustain initiatives, the full engagement of all relevant stakeholders is essential. Ministries of finance and planning, other line ministries, parliamentarians and national machineries for the advancement of women need to understand the importance of and develop capacity for mainstreaming gender perspectives into economic policy and budget formulation.

29. Member States acknowledged that national machineries for the advancement of women should play a key role in public finance management, including through engaging with ministries of finance and planning in the budgetary process. In Algeria and Ecuador, the national machineries collaborated with the ministries of finance to promote the incorporation of gender perspectives in the design and implementation of fiscal and budgetary policy. In the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Gender Equality and the Family provided gender equality inputs to the Ministry of Planning and Budget prior to the preparation of budget guidelines. Sweden's Ministry of Finance and Division for Gender Equality worked together to raise awareness about gender-responsive budgeting and highlight the gender-differentiated distribution of economic resources. Mexico's national machinery elaborated and distributed manuals and methodological guides on gender-responsive budgeting in its promotion of gender mainstreaming in public administration.

30. Legislative bodies can ensure that commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment are incorporated into budgets.[29] Sweden's Parliament, for example, was mandated to carry out gender analysis and develop gender equality objectives on proposed legislation. In Belgium and Finland, gender impact assessments of legislation were required. In Canada's House of Commons, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women examined the extent to which gender-based analysis was used by federal departments in policy and programme development. To raise awareness on the need to integrate gender perspectives in the legislative process, Mexico's Centre for Studies for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equity, created by the Commission on Equity and Gender in its House of Deputies, provided research, analysis and technical assistance to facilitate gender mainstreaming in parliamentary work.

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[28] See report of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

[29] See Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Development Fund for Women and World Bank Institute, *Parliament, the Budget, and Gender*, Handbook for Parliamentarians, No. 6 (Geneva, 2004), p. 37.

31. The importance of the participation of women and non-governmental stakeholders in budgetary planning was underscored. Cambodia, for example, reported on the representation of women in Commune Planning and Budgeting Committees. The Russian Federation's Ministry of Health and Social Development, in coordination with non-governmental organizations, formed a coordination council on gender equality issues to analyse the federal budget.

32. The sustainability of gender-responsive budgeting initiatives requires the full institutionalization of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities and information campaigns on gender-responsive budgeting. Many such initiatives, targeting both Government officials and the public, were reported by Member States, including Belize, Indonesia and Swaziland.[27] Tunisia and Cyprus reported training initiatives for civil servants in the finance and planning ministries. In collaboration with non-governmental organizations and United Nations system partners, the Government of China organized over 20 training courses for representatives from all levels of government.

33. Conferences were organized at national and international levels to promote gender-responsive budgeting to increase accountability for policy commitments on gender equality. Germany hosted a European Union Conference on Gender Budgeting, which brought together national and international experts from a range of stakeholders, to share best practices and concrete benefits for the implementation of gender equality policies. Italy convened a conference on "Gender Audit of Government Budgets" and launched a Network of Provinces and Cities for the Dissemination of Information on Gender Budget and Best Practices for Equal Opportunities.

34. Member States also highlighted initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the general public. A Women's Budget Kit provided to the public in Australia outlined important measures for women in the budget. In Canada, an independent non-profit research organization published an alternative budget each year, which included chapters on gender equality.

35. Tools developed by Member States included guidelines on sectoral budgets (United Republic of Tanzania) and gender implication statements (New Zealand (see note 26 above)). In the Republic of Korea, gender-sensitive budget plans and Gender-Impact Policy Analyses were used in budget preparation. In the Netherlands, Emancipation Effect Reports and Gender Budget Analyses were submitted on a voluntary basis by government departments.

36. Gender perspectives were incorporated into guidelines and instructions used by some Member States, for example, Spain. Peru's Ministry of Economy and Finance partially incorporated a gender equality focus in the instructions for the budget. Guidelines for Finland's national budget stipulated that each Ministry must include allocations for gender equality in its main budget line.

37. National budget guidelines in Austria required that all ministries illustrate the gender-related impacts with at least one example in their respective budget chapters, and that annotations to preliminary budget estimates incorporate gender perspectives. In Belgium, gender mainstreaming is emphasized in internal notes on budget preparation sent to all federal institutions, and gender policy notes are required in all phases of budgetary preparations.

38. The availability of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of gender-responsive public finance management. Colombia noted that, while it did not have a single-source mechanism to track budgetary information on gender equality, its Observatory of Gender Issues had designed a system of indicators for collecting, systematizing, processing and analysing statistical data which could inform policymaking.

B. National economic policies, plans and programmes

39. Macroeconomic policies have important implications for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Decreases in government revenues, for example, can lead to cuts in social spending, impacting household budgets, with disproportionate effects on women.[30] On the other hand, gender inequalities, such as limits on women's equal access to labour-market participation and wage inequalities, also have significant costs for national economic development.[31]

40. Several Member States acknowledged the impact of macroeconomic policies on gender equality and women's empowerment. Haiti, for example, reported that women may face constraints on fully benefiting from trade and investment, particularly agricultural trade. Others reported on steps taken to examine the impact of existing macroeconomic policies and to make them more gender-responsive. Pakistan, for example, intends to review the impact of free trade and structural adjustment on women, in support of its Gender Reform Action Plan.

41. Employment-generation is recognized as a crucial mechanism for the mobilization of domestic resources.[32] Member States, including Cameroon, Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Andorra and Uruguay, integrated gender perspectives in labour-market policies, strategies and actions to enhance women's economic empowerment (see note 26 above). Greece integrated attention to gender perspectives within the framework of its business plan, "Employment and Vocational Training 2000-2006", implemented by its General Secretariat for Gender Equality. The Netherlands Memorandum on Emancipation 2008-2011, a policy on equality of women and men in the labour market, aimed to create additional opportunities for women, including, for example, by taking remedial action wherever tax measures hinder women's increased participation in the labour market.

42. Other steps taken to increase women's economic opportunity have included adaptation of regulations governing working conditions to ensure women's equal access to employment in Monaco and the provision of social credit certificates in San Marino. Maldives passed legislation providing for equal work for equal pay.

43. The role of the private sector as an important partner in promoting equal opportunities for women in the labour market was underlined. In Luxembourg, the Government provided financial assistance to private sector companies that invest in gender equality and ensure equal wages for women and men. Egypt and Mexico, in

[30] See report of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

[31] Department for International Development, Growth Team, Policy and Research Division, "Strengthening the connection between gender and growth", in *Financing Gender Equality: Commonwealth Perspectives* (London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007), pp. 23-24.

[32] See General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 24 (a).

coordination with multilateral partners, took steps to encourage the private sector to hire women through a gender equality certification programme.

44. Member States reported on actions taken to promote women's entrepreneurship. The Maldives Ministry of Planning and National Development and Ministry of Gender and Family, for example, incorporated gender perspectives in the 2006 census processes, taking into account all economic activities carried out by women in both the formal and informal sectors. In Poland, national and regional labour offices can allocate funds to women entrepreneurs. National microcredit and microfinance schemes targeting women's economic empowerment were also reported, including Pakistan's National Fund for the Advancement of Rural Women.

45. National development plans and poverty reduction strategies are important planning tools for identifying priorities and resource needs. Gender perspectives, however, are not always systematically incorporated into these planning instruments. A recent analysis of national Millennium Development Goals reporting and poverty reduction strategy papers revealed that Governments missed critical opportunities to fully identify and address gender perspectives.[33]

46. Some Member States reported steps to incorporate gender equality concerns into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. For example, Colombia's National Development Plan 2006-2010 committed to mainstreaming gender perspectives in all plans, programmes and mechanisms of the public administration.

47. National machineries have an important role in ensuring that gender perspectives are incorporated into national economic policies, plans and programmes. Cambodia's Ministry of Women's Affairs mainstreamed gender perspectives into the National Strategic Development Plan (2006-2010), with gender equality issues clearly defined across all sectors. A project in the Ministry of Women Development in Pakistan built capacity for mainstreaming gender perspectives in the National Plan of Action and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. In Greece, the national machinery actively participated in the elaboration of the National Strategic Plan for Development 2007-2013.

48. Efforts to monitor and evaluate economic policies, plans and programmes from a gender perspective were also reported by Member States. Italy's Institute for Labour Training and the Department for Rights and Equal Opportunities collaborated to design a tool for assessing the differentiated impact of policies on women and men. In Greece, an ad hoc planning group monitored integration of proposals on gender equality into national planning.

49. Member States noted that the lack of data disaggregated by sex and gender-sensitive indicators hindered effective monitoring and evaluation of national economic policies, plans and programmes. Cambodia recognized a need to create stronger links with the Ministry of Planning and the National Institute of Statistics to ensure a more comprehensive use of sex-disaggregated data to monitor its National Strategic Development Plan. Egypt will put in place a gender-sensitive mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the National Five-year Socio-Economic Development Plan, with the cooperation of planners and officers in monitoring units of line ministries. A capacity-building programme

[33] See A/62/187, para. 73.

targeting local and national institutions in Tunisia included a focus on the collection of sex-disaggregated statistics. The Russian Federation incorporated gender perspectives into its national statistics programme.

C. Mechanisms and instruments on gender equality, including policies, plans and programmes

50. Mechanisms and instruments established to promote gender equality, including policies, strategies, plans and programmes for gender equality and women's empowerment, should be costed and resource needs should be explicitly reflected in budgets, so as to ensure the allocation of sufficient resources for their full and effective implementation.

51. In some countries, policies, plans and programmes on gender equality are financed through dedicated or women-specific budgets. Japan's budget for the promotion of gender equality contained line items for each of the 12 priority objectives of its Basic Plan for Gender Equality, and a line for improvement and strengthening of the policies and measures for gender equality. Capital and recurrent costs for phase I of Pakistan's National Gender Reform Action Plan are funded by the Government.

52. The fact that national plans for gender equality and the empowerment of women are rarely fully integrated into national development plans or national budgets may hinder their full and effective implementation.[34] Some Member States have taken steps, however, to more closely link such plans to overall national development plans. The Five-year Socio-economic Development Plans for the Advancement of Women, formulated by Egypt's National Council for Women, have been integrated into National Five-year Socio-Economic Development Plans. This has resulted in proposals for a substantive increase in the budgetary allocations earmarked for women-specific development projects.

53. Examples of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programmes on gender equality were provided. Japan's Specialist Committee on Monitoring and Gender Impact Assessment and Evaluation assessed the implementation of the Plan for Gender Equality in each ministry or agency.

54. While the challenges in implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy as a result of inadequate resources have been reported by some Member States, such as Bolivia, Kenya, Seychelles, Suriname and Latvia (see note 26 above), other Member States have developed mechanisms for financing the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. The Plan for the Advancement of Women in Austria's Ministry of Finance guaranteed the necessary allocation of funds for the integration of a gender perspective in decision-making processes across all line ministries. Under Belgium's Gender Mainstreaming Law, ministries must establish strategic priorities using annual policy notes; establish relevant indicators to measure integration of gender perspectives in policy objectives; prepare gender policy notes in all phases of budget preparation; and prepare interim and final reports on progress made in gender mainstreaming.

[34] United Nations Development Fund for Women, "Promoting gender equality in new aid modalities and partnerships", UNIFEM Discussion Paper (New York, UNIFEM, March 2006).

55. In Cambodia, Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans have been developed in ministerial budget proposals for approval by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Under Lithuania's National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, all ministries included allocations for the implementation of gender equality measures within their respective budgets. In Thailand, all departments are responsible for budget planning under the Master Plan for Gender Equality (2007-2011).

56. The Republic of Korea's Five-year Basic Plan for Women's Policies, established to promote its gender mainstreaming strategy, was financed through a dedicated budget. Cuba's National Action Plan in Follow-up to the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women provided a methodological guide for mainstreaming gender equality into policies and programmes across all sectors, with earmarked budgets.

D. Financing for national mechanisms for the advancement of women

57. The 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action noted that a broad range of national mechanisms for gender equality and empowerment of women had been established.[35] In addition to national machineries, gender equality commissions or committees, ombudspersons offices and focal points in line ministries had been set up in many countries, and parliamentary networks or caucuses had also been established. The mandates, roles and resources of these mechanisms varied widely. Limited financial resources were identified as a common obstacle to the effective functioning of these institutional mechanisms for gender equality.[36]

58. National machineries for the advancement of women, such as ministries or departments within ministries, continue to be the central policy-coordinating unit inside government in most countries. Many national machineries remain marginalized, however, in national government structures and are hampered by a lack of resources and political support. This limits their ability to advocate for, support and monitor policies and programmes on gender equality; to fulfil their catalytic role in supporting gender mainstreaming across all policy areas and levels; and to ensure sufficient attention to resource needs for gender equality and empowerment of women in national budgets.[37]

59. Responses of Member States indicated that the status of funding for national machineries varied considerably. Many countries, for example, Ukraine, Togo, Dominica, El Salvador, Uganda, Jordan and Armenia (see note 26 above), noted that the shortage of financial resources, including to national machineries, limited the implementation of commitments on gender equality.

60. Mexico reported a decline in funding, while Cambodia noted that allocations to its national machinery were lower than those to other government agencies. Haiti

[35] See E/CN.6/2005/2 and Corr.1, part four, sect. II.

[36] See report of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the role of national mechanisms in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women: achievements, gaps and challenges, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, Rome, 29 November-2 December 2004 (EGM/National Machinery/2004/REPORT).

[37] Ibid.

reported that budgetary allocations to its national machinery were 1 per cent of the total national budget. Egypt reported that funding to its national machinery was similar to that of other ministries. Both Cyprus and Tunisia reported an increase in funding.

61. Member States reported receiving both technical and financial support for national machineries from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Thailand's national machinery, for example, received funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to create an information system on gender equality, including a database of data disaggregated by sex. Honduras and Ecuador reported support to their national machineries received from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

62. Relatively little information was provided on the financing of other mechanisms at national level for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Honduras reported that a gender unit had been created in the Secretariat of Finances to ensure the links between gender equality and economic growth. In Cyprus, gender equality bodies were established in the public sector, and their budgets were fully covered by the Government. Administrative adjustments in Colombia allowed line ministries to incorporate a gender equality focus in their work through the creation of new offices or the assignment of new functions. Slovakia recognized the importance of creating institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming at all levels, and had proposed the creation of national machinery for the advancement of women.

E. Financing for women's organizations

63. Women's organizations and networks play an important role in advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women; keeping critical issues in the national agenda; and promoting accountability for, and monitoring implementation of, commitments made on gender equality at national and global levels. These organizations and networks receive funding from a variety of sources, including Governments, bilateral/multilateral agencies, private foundations, international non-governmental organizations and individuals.

64. At the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, Member States, including Denmark and Portugal, reported on government funding for women's organizations to assist in the implementation of national plans and programmes. Others, including Liechtenstein, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Dominican Republic and Malta, funded organizations to implement more targeted projects; Member States, including Barbados, called for increased financing aimed at strengthening partnerships with non-governmental organizations (see note 26 above).

65. Some Member States, such as Thailand and Cyprus, indicated that funding for women's organizations was provided by the national machinery for the advancement of women. Australia's Government Office for Women funded four National Women's Secretariats, and its Women's Leadership and Development Programme funded activities by national women's groups to strengthen women's capacity to contribute to policy areas that affected them.

66. Some national machineries established specific funds for supporting women's organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Republic of Korea established a Government-financed/privately-financed Women's Development Fund that, inter alia, finances women's projects. A fund established in Mexico's national machinery provided financial support to non-governmental organization projects on gender equality. In Austria, women's organizations were funded to undertake advisory activities in social sectors, and women's projects received annual financial support from the Federal Chancellery.

67. Other mechanisms were also in place at national level to ensure funding for women's organizations. Finland's Parliament approved a law that will provide annual State subsidies to major women's organizations, and increased resources for women's organizations engaged in the promotion of gender equality. Sweden's Committee for the Allocation of Government Grants to Women's Organizations and Gender Equality Projects allocated funds for gender equality projects, in line with the country's Gender Equality Policy.

68. Funding was provided to women's organizations or non-governmental organizations, including through national machineries, for innovative or pilot programmes. For example, Germany's national machinery funded pilot schemes, studies and evaluations carried out by non-governmental organizations supporting women's empowerment and gender equality. Poland's national machinery made allocations for innovative non-governmental organization initiatives on gender equality. The Netherlands plans to allocate funds to stimulate a number of innovative and agenda-setting initiatives by women's networks in support of equal opportunities for women and men, at both local and national levels.

69. Bilateral and multilateral agencies, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, were also noted as an important source of funding for non-governmental organizations working for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, including by Chad, Liberia and Turkey (see note 26 above). In Cambodia, for example, non-governmental organizations managed funds for gender mainstreaming from development partners, in line with the priorities in the country's National Strategic Development Plan, and served as implementation agencies. Peru also noted that non-governmental organizations received international funding for project implementation.

70. Member States also reported on funding for women's organizations or non-governmental organizations provided through their development cooperation programmes. Luxembourg supported development non-governmental organizations that implemented projects targeted to women in developing countries. Sweden provided funding for cooperation partnerships between Swedish organizations and local women's organizations and networks in nearly all partner countries, and channelled funds though non-governmental organizations. Non-governmental organizations receiving bilateral funding from Belgium were required to address gender equality, and to include gender perspectives in reports on implementation of programmes.

F. Development cooperation

71. International development cooperation is an important mechanism for financing gender equality and women's empowerment. While approaches to

incorporating gender equality in development cooperation and official development assistance (ODA) varied across countries, Member States, including Ireland and Norway (see note 26 above), indicated, in the context of the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2005, that gender equality was emerging as a central guiding principle in development cooperation.

72. Given evidence of the strong links among gender equality and economic growth, poverty reduction, aid effectiveness and good governance, Australia made gender equality an overarching principle of its aid programme and will provide assistance to partner Governments in meeting commitments on gender equality. Austria sponsored multilateral programmes and projects for the promotion of gender equality, and established "gender equality and empowerment of women" as a leading principle in its three-year programme. Japan incorporated gender equality into its revised ODA Charter as a basic goal, and the 2005 Medium-Term Policy on ODA stated that gender perspectives were to be reflected in all development efforts as a matter of principle.

73. Member States, including Finland and Canada, took a two-track approach to gender equality in their development cooperation efforts. Germany earmarked well over half of its bilateral ODA funding for mainstream projects and programmes that have demonstrably positive impacts on gender equality, and has pledged additional funding for targeted projects and programmes.

74. Mechanisms for funding women-specific programmes, including microcredit and microfinance initiatives, were also reported. Qatar established a fund that supports programmes for women and young people, and Monaco funded women-specific projects in the areas of education and economic empowerment.

75. As mentioned earlier, Member States also reported on support from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Projects promoting women's economic empowerment in Algeria, for example, were funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the implementation of Peru's Country Programme Plan of Action 2006-2010 was supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Resources were mobilized for gender equality and women's empowerment through initiatives in international financial institutions, including the World Bank's Action Plan "Gender Equality is Smart Economics".

76. The need for increased bilateral and multilateral support was expressed by several Member States. Haiti, for example, noted that increased and sustained multilateral support was needed to support the implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment.

77. A number of specific mechanisms for ensuring development cooperation resources were effectively utilized in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women were reported. Within Cambodia's Government Donor Coordination Committee, for example, a Technical Working Group on Gender mobilized resources to support gender mainstreaming in all sectors and monitored their effective use. In the Philippines, a quota of 5-30 per cent of ODA funding was legally required for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by all national and local government agencies or units, within their mandates. However, it also noted that such quotas can pose limitations.

G. New aid modalities and strengthened delivery mechanisms

78. New aid modalities and efforts to strengthen effective delivery of ODA have implications for gender equality and women's empowerment. The shift from programme-based aid to general or sectoral budget support, as well as the Paris Declaration principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, mutual accountability and performance measurement, presents both opportunities and challenges for financing for gender equality and women's empowerment.[38] The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness acknowledged that harmonization efforts are needed on cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality.[39] In the new aid environment, ensuring that promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women will receive adequate financial resources requires that gender equality be prioritized in national development objectives and plans.[40]

79. Responses from Member States highlighted some of their experience with new aid modalities. Cambodia, for example, reported that while donors align objectives on gender equality within the framework of the Ministry of Women's Affairs' strategic plan, the development of gender-responsive sectoral strategies and plans presents challenges as well as opportunities in ensuring gender analysis and appropriate budget allocations for implementation. The Philippines raised concerns over the availability of information on financing, and access to decision-making in the formulation of development assistance frameworks. Cuba highlighted the need to ensure that international cooperation is provided within the framework of mutual respect, which will permit Governments to meet their international commitments on gender equality.

80. Tools for tracking and monitoring ODA can help ensure that funds target gender equality and the empowerment of women. Sweden, for example, included gender analyses in country cooperation strategies, offered support to training and methodology development on gender mainstreaming, and developed tools to monitor the gender equality impacts of budget support and sector-wide programmes. Monaco emphasized gender mainstreaming in the management of its international development cooperation, and developed indicators to measure results and impact. Belgium systematically used a checklist on gender equality objectives in the projects it funded.

81. An Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) gender equality policy marker has been developed to measure the amount of aid focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, by identifying activities that have gender equality as a principal or significant objective.[41] Some Member States, including Germany and Finland, reported that they apply the policy marker to their development assistance.

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[38] UNIFEM, "Promoting gender equality in new aid modalities and partnerships", UNIFEM Discussion Paper (New York, UNIFEM, March 2006).

[39] See Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability, issued at the High-level Forum, Paris, 28 February-2 March 2005, para. 42.

[40] UNIFEM, "Promoting gender equality in new aid modalities and partnerships", UNIFEM Discussion Paper (New York, UNIFEM, March 2006).

[41] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Secretariat, "Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment: statistics based on DAC members' reporting on the Gender Equality Policy Marker, 2004-2005", June 2007.

82. Cambodia launched an ODA database, which required all development partners to register resource allocation information via a website, and the Ministry of Women's Affairs Department of Planning developed a management information system for tracking gender responsiveness in ODA, including a resource mobilization matrix circulated to donors. The Government, together with development partners, adopted a Harmonization, Alignment and Results Action Plan which included joint monitoring indicators. The Philippines reported that the absence of an accounting system for the Gender and Development Budget and ODA funds targeting gender equality hindered its ability to monitor and evaluate aid use. The need to institutionalize the generation of sex-disaggregated data so as to increase the targeting of beneficiaries was also noted. In coordination with donors, the Philippines developed harmonized guidelines for project development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, which included a common set of analytical concepts and tools to measure the gender responsiveness of projects.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

83. **The global commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women at national level have yet to be fully implemented. Unless financial resources are mobilized across all sectors, through both domestic and international channels, progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women will remain slow.**

84. **Sound and equitable public finance management can ensure increased resource allocation to meet gender equality commitments. Recent shifts towards results-based budgeting provide opportunities for mainstreaming gender perspectives in public finance, including through gender-responsive budgeting.**

85. **Gender-responsive budget initiatives have been implemented by a large number of Member States. Many initiatives have not, however, bee . adequately linked to overall public finance management or moved beyond analysis of expenditures. Greater efforts are needed to identify gender perspectives in relation to revenue.**

86. **Gender equality is not yet seen as a central goal in all national-level economic policies, plans and programmes, which results in limited coherence between policy commitments on gender equality and resource allocations.**

87. **The failure to assess the costs of, and secure resources for, implementation of gender equality policies, strategies and plans, including the gender mainstreaming strategy, constrains the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women.**

88. **National mechanisms for the advancement of women need significantly increased resources to advocate for, support and monitor the incorporation of gender perspectives in all policy areas and the implementation of gender equality plans and programmes. The critical role of women's organizations in promoting accountability for and monitoring implementation of commitments on gender equality at national level must also be supported through increased funding.**

89. **Sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators are needed to ensure the effective monitoring and evaluation of all national plans, policies and programmes from a gender perspective.**

90. **The Commission on the Status of Women may wish to call on Governments, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, the private sector and other relevant actors, as appropriate, to:**

(a) **Develop methodologies and tools to systematically incorporate a gender perspective into results-based public finance management systems, including through analysis of both revenues and expenditures, and ensure that tools developed to monitor and evaluate public financial management systems incorporate a gender perspective;**

(b) **Allocate resources to build capacity for gender mainstreaming within finance and other line ministries, national machineries and parliaments, and among other stakeholders, to ensure that domestic resource mobilization and allocation are carried out in a gender-sensitive manner;**

(c) **Ensure that gender equality is prioritized as a central goal in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all national economic policies, strategies and plans, across all policy areas, including in national development strategies and poverty reduction strategies, and encourage the active participation of national mechanisms for the advancement of women and women's organizations in the design and development of such policies, strategies and plans;**

(d) **Increase the share of development assistance specifically targeting gender equality and women's empowerment and, building on existing mechanisms, strengthen ways and means to effectively assess the resources allocated to incorporating gender perspectives in all areas of development assistance;**

(e) **Cost and fully resource national gender equality policies, strategies and plans, including the gender mainstreaming strategy, and ensure that they are incorporated into overall national development strategies and reflected in relevant sector plans and budgets;**

(f) **Strengthen the mandates of national machineries for the advancement of women, and ensure that they are adequately resourced to carry out their critical mandates in advocating for, supporting and monitoring the incorporation of gender perspectives in all policy areas and the implementation of gender equality plans and programmes;**

(g) **Identify and address the challenges that women's organizations face in securing adequate and sustained funding for their activities at national level;**

(h) **Improve sex-disaggregated data collection and develop performance indicators to measure progress in financing gender equality and empowerment of women at national level.**

91. **The Commission may wish to encourage the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to:**

(a) Invite States parties to include information in their reports on resources allocated to gender equality and women's empowerment;

(b) Ensure that the Committee's lists of issues and questions prepared as an input into the consideration of reports of States parties include the explicit request for information on resources allocated to gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels.

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Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report summarizes the situation of Palestinian women between October 2006 and September 2007, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/7. It reviews the situation of Palestinian women and provides an overview of the assistance provided by entities of the United Nations system, inter alia, with regard to humanitarian assistance, economic activities, education and training, health and the human rights of women. The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2007/7 on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, the Economic and Social Council, concerned about the grave situation of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, requested the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation, to assist Palestinian women by all available means, including those laid out in the previous report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2007/4) and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-second session a report, including information provided by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report covers the period from October 2006 to September 2007, and reviews the situation of Palestinian women based on information from United Nations bodies or individuals that monitor the situation of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Such bodies and individuals include the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

3. The report also reflects information submitted by entities of the United Nations system that provide assistance to Palestinian women, including the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the World Bank.

4. The social and economic situation of Palestinian women from 2000-2006 was highlighted in a report commissioned by the ESCWA Centre for Women (E/ESCWA/ECW/2007/Technical Paper.1), which was distributed to countries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. ESCWA also prepared the report entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people, including Palestinian women, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", contained in the note by the Secretary-General (A/62/75-E/2007/13.

5. The present report provides recommendations on improving the situation of Palestinian women, including through the continued assistance of the United Nations system.

II. Situation of Palestinian women

6. During the period under review, the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory deepened and continued to claim lives (A/62/82-E/2007/66, para. 77). The Israeli-Hizbullah conflict in Lebanon and its political fallout brought to a halt any Israeli attempts to implement a unilateral withdrawal from parts of the West Bank (ibid., para. 9). Settlement activity and construction of the barrier continued in the West Bank, as did Israeli incursions into population centres. Efforts to bring political progress through dialogue between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert have continued, under the auspices of the United States Secretary of State.

7. In addition, an intense round of intra-Palestinian violence in Gaza in December 2006 and January 2007 threatened to degenerate into civil war (ibid., para. 8). An agreement, reached on 8 February 2007 to end the factional violence, and the subsequent formation of the Palestinian Government of National Unity, calmed the situation, though clan feuds continued in Gaza where law and order are yet to be fully restored and the firing of rockets into Israel is yet to be halted (ibid.). The Government of National Unity came to an end in June 2007, when President Abbas dismissed Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and appointed a Government led by Salam Fayyad, which committed to the Quartet principles. With the formation of the Government, the European Union and the United States announced their intention to renew direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority.[1] The United Nations strongly advocated for all parties to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding the use of force and the protection of civilians. Through the Quartet and other channels, the United Nations worked to facilitate the release of Palestinian customs and tax revenues through agreed mechanisms, and encouraged the international community to continue to assist Palestinians in need (A/62/82-E/2007/66, para. 10).

8. The conflict continued to have a serious detrimental effect on all Palestinian people. According to the report of the Director-General of the International Labour Organization on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, living standards declined; poverty and unemployment increased; and social disintegration and political disarray intensified.[2] The report also indicated that the financial embargo imposed by the international community on the Palestinian Authority, the withholding of Palestinian revenues by Israel, the suspension by Western donors of their direct budget support, and the restrictions on mobility have led to the further deterioration of the situation as compared with the previous year.[3]

9. The ongoing conflict has resulted in a near collapse of the Palestinian economy, soaring unemployment and a sharp increase in poverty.[4] The World Bank

[1] Department of Public Information, News and Media Division, Press release of 5701st meeting (AM) of the Security Council, 20 June 2007 (SC/9053).

[2] ILO (2007). Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, para. 7.

[3] Ibid.

[4] World Bank, Country Brief: Middle East and North Africa Region, West Bank and Gaza (September 2007).

reported that during the last two years, the collapse has accelerated, with gross domestic product contracting by nearly 9 per cent in 2006 and by 4.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2007. The long-standing fiscal crisis deepened further in 2006 as a result of Israel's withholding of Palestinian clearance revenues and the aid boycott, resulting in a deficit of over 1 billion United States dollars ($).[4]

10. Poverty and unemployment reached very high levels, with close to 66 per cent of all households in the Occupied Palestinian Territory living below the national poverty line and 24 per cent of the labour force unemployed.[5] The situation was particularly severe in Gaza, where 80 per cent of the population relied on United Nations food aid and 88 per cent lived below the official poverty line of $2.20 per day (ibid., para. 15). There are substantial gender differences in the labour market, and military occupation has tended to reinforce discrimination both directly and indirectly.[6] According to ILO calculations based on the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2006 only 14.7 per cent of women were in employment, compared to 52.0 per cent of men. Most women were engaged in housekeeping (54.1 per cent) or studying (21.1 per cent).[7]

11. While 6 out of 10 young women in the 15 to 24 age group were engaged in studies, the investment was lost to Palestinian society as very few Palestinian women were in employment.[8] Only 4.5 per cent of young women were in employment in 2006, compared to 28.6 per cent of young men. Nearly one in three young women was engaged in housekeeping.[7]

12. The lives of Palestinian women continued to be at great risk as evidenced by the increasing number of women killed or injured.[9] Between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2007, a total of 67 Palestinian women were killed as a result of the direct conflict or internal violence and 120 were injured throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. During the same period, direct conflict resulted in the killing of 2 Israeli women and the injury of 12 others.[9] As of June 2007, 118 Palestinian women, including minors, pregnant women and mothers, remained in Israeli prisons, detention facilities and camps.[10]

13. The right to freedom of movement has continued to be obstructed by more than 500 checkpoints, roadblocks, earth mounds and other types of obstacles. Movement is also curtailed by the permit system and the barrier (A/62/360, para. 24). During the period under review there has been a 43 per cent increase in the number of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in the West Bank (ibid., para. 38). Primarily owing to closures, delays at checkpoints and the barrier, close to 30 per cent of pregnant women in the West Bank had difficulties accessing antenatal care and safe delivery.[11] Both primary and secondary services have declined, especially as the large majority of delivery and newborn care services (80 per cent of the deliveries in six Health Ministry hospitals in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) are unable to perform regular maintenance. Pregnant women with post-natal

[5] ILO, op. cit., para. 12.
[6] ILO, op. cit., para 87.
[7] ILO, op. cit., table 3.3.
[8] ILO, op. cit., para. 88.
[9] Contribution of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the report (2007).
[10] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/62/35), para. 20.
[11] Ibid., para. 31.

complications may also be at greater risk when discharged too early from the hospital owing to lack of staff and space. Emergency obstetrics has become a priority (see A/62/75-E/2007/13, para. 49).

14. According to UNFPA, the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health reported that since 2000, at least 68 pregnant Palestinian women gave birth at Israeli checkpoints. Additionally, 10 per cent of pregnant women spent two to four hours on the road before reaching a medical centre or a hospital, while 6 per cent spent more than four hours, when the normal travelling time before the intifada was 15 to 30 minutes. This hardship is estimated to have contributed to an 8.2 per cent increase in the number of home deliveries.[12] According to Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health statistics for 2006, there were an estimated 117,000 pregnant women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including some 18,000 who suffered from difficult pregnancy and birth owing to a lack of appropriate and timely antenatal, delivery and post-natal care. In fact, inadequate medical care during pregnancy was the third cause of mortality among Palestinian women of reproductive age, according to the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Health (see A/HRC/4/57, para. 12).

15. Owing to the closures and the barrier, many families are reluctant to let their daughters endure the degrading experience of waiting at checkpoints or barrier crossing points, to be searched or subjected to harassment by Israeli soldiers, or to have to walk long distances to avoid such experiences. Families are much more likely to pressure young women to drop out of school and not pursue higher levels of education (A/62/75-E/2007/13, para. 65).

16. The Special Committee noted that the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had not improved during the reporting period, and particularly in the Gaza Strip, it had deteriorated significantly (A/62/360, para. 23). It was reported to the Special Committee that one pregnant prisoner was made to sit handcuffed on a small chair, was blindfolded and hit on the face. Some female prisoners had given birth in prison while tied to their beds. The Special Committee was also told that one of the ways to force suspects to surrender to Israel forces was to threaten their spouses and sisters with rape (ibid., para. 64). According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the intensity of Israeli actions in the month of May in the Gaza Strip had dramatically affected the already undermined physical and psychological security of women and severely reduced their enjoyment of basic human rights. In the central Gaza Strip, women were forced to cease all activities at a centre for women during the month of May owing to the threat of shelling in the area, as well as inter-factional violence. The increased level of violence among Palestinian factions had been an aggravating factor, contributing to the further collapse of women's protection.[13]

17. A 2005/2006 survey, published in 2007, carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics found that violence against women, especially domestic violence, was one of the problems faced by households in the Western and Arab societies. Approximately two thirds of ever-married women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory stated that they had been subjected to psychological violence

[12] UNFPA news feature, "Checkpoints compound the risks of childbirth for Palestinian women" (15 May 2007), available from http://www.unfpa.org/news/news.cfm?ID=972.

[13] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *The Humanitarian Monitor: Occupied Palestinian Territory*, No. 13 (May 2007), p. 7.

and almost one quarter had been subjected to physical violence from their husband. Among unmarried women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, more than one half stated that they had been subjected to psychological violence and a quarter of them to physical violence.[14] The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported an increase in the number of deaths for so-called immoral behaviour, including honour killings by families. In 2007 there were 11 cases of honour killings of women reported in the Gaza Strip.[15]

18. The right to education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to be seriously affected by the occupation. UNRWA reported that the dropout rate was very high, graduation rates were low and female education was generally on the decline. It attributed the collapse of Gaza's education system and education standards to the cumulative effects of the occupation, closures, poverty and violence (A/62/360, para. 58). According to UNICEF, primary school enrolment rates for girls fell from a peak of 98 per cent in 2000/2001 to 92.1 per cent in 2005/2006. For boys, the decline was from 95.8 per cent to 90.5 per cent. A huge gap exists between the proportion of girls completing primary school (94.5 per cent) and those enrolling in secondary school (76.4 per cent).[16] Attendance at rural girls' schools declines even further at each education level (A/62/75-E/2007/13, para. 66).

19. UNICEF indicated that young Palestinian girls had few opportunities for development, recreation and participation, and that there were few safe spaces for young girls to congregate. Most of the 300 youth clubs across the Occupied Palestinian Territory lacked funding and were poorly managed and equipped.[17] Furthermore, UNICEF noted that the adolescence of many young women has been compromised by household demands, or pressures to marry early as the median age at first marriages for women was 18 years.[16]

20. Food insecurity disproportionately affects women and children. A study conducted by UNRWA in September 2006 revealed that 57.5 per cent of children from 6 to 36 months and 44.9 per cent of pregnant women in the Gaza Strip were anaemic.[18] Of children under 5 years of age, 22 per cent were vitamin A-deficient; 20 per cent showed signs of iodine deficiency (32 per cent in the West Bank and 3 per cent in the Gaza Strip); and 4.1 per cent in the Gaza Strip suffered from clinical vitamin D-deficiency (rickets). The increased incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases and cancer, represents an epidemiological shift that imposes additional burdens on the scarce human and financial resources (A/62/75-E/2007/13, para. 51). The 60th World Health Assembly expressed concern about the health crisis and rising levels of food insecurity and demanded improvement in the living and medical conditions of Palestinian detainees, including of women and children.[19]

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[14] Palestinian National Authority, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Violence against women in Palestinian society (Domestic Violence Survey 2005/2006).

[15] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *OCHA Special Focus: Israeli-Palestinian Fatalities Since 2000 — Key Trends* (August 2007), p. 5.

[16] UNICEF contribution to the report (2007).

[17] *UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2007* (29 January 2007), excerpts.

[18] UNRWA contribution to the report (2006).

[19] Resolution WHA.60.2 entitled "Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

21. Women continued to outlive men. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2006 the life expectancy for men was 71.7 years compared to 73.2 years for women. In the West Bank, life expectancy was reported as 71.9 years for men and 73.6 years for women, and 71.4 years for men and 72.5 for women in the Gaza Strip.[20]

III. Assistance to Palestinian women

22. The present section focuses on the assistance provided to Palestinian women by entities of the United Nations system. Nine areas of support have been identified: education and training; information and communications technology; health; employment and entrepreneurship; women's human rights; violence against women; humanitarian assistance; advocacy and information; and gender mainstreaming.

A. Education and training

23. Several United Nations entities focused on initiatives to improve the access of women and girls to education and training opportunities. During the 2006/2007 academic year, approximately 500,000 students, half of them girls, were enrolled in UNRWA elementary, preparatory and secondary schools. Young women constituted 75 per cent of the beneficiaries of small scholarship projects undertaken by UNRWA.

24. Efforts were made to enhance access to education, including through construction and/or rehabilitation of community buildings for schools, school feeding projects and provision of school supplies. Within the framework of the Integrated Community Development Project ($15 million), the World Bank supported schools for girls, construction/rehabilitation of community buildings, and rehabilitation of kindergartens. UNIFEM partnered with WFP in a pilot phase of a West Bank school feeding project to provide over 13,000 schoolchildren with healthy midday snacks, which were produced in centres employing over 225 disadvantaged women. Approximately 100,000 schoolchildren in severely affected areas, half of them girls, were provided with school bags and stationery by UNICEF.

25. To enhance the quality of education, training was provided for 75 principals of girls' schools, 150 female school teachers, 2,000 newly appointed teachers and 120 new supervisors. Some 190 librarians in the West Bank were also supported.

26. An initiative was undertaken to empower girls through educational television programmes. The UNESCO Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation are developing a public-private partnership with Sesame Workshop, the non-profit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, to produce the latest season of *Shara'a Simsim*, the Palestinian version of its internationally renowned educational television series. The season 2007-2008 focuses on promoting girls' education and gender equality.

27. To increase access to alternative spaces for learning and recreation, including those in rural areas, UNICEF supported learning centres. In 2007, some 68,200

[20] Palestinian National Authority, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Demographic and Socioeconomic Status of the Palestinian People at the end of 2006 (December 2006).

adolescents, 51 per cent of them girls, participated in learning and recreational activities and many thousands more used the computer, library, sports and music facilities. The learning centres enabled adolescent girls, especially those living in rural areas, to participate in sports competitions for the first time.

28. Training programmes for women were provided in a wide range of areas, including leadership development, human rights and financial management. In the West Bank, Palestinian women benefited from the WFP Food-for-Work and training activities that focused on skills development, knowledge transfer and enhancement of the productive capacity of women. Women constituted 50 per cent of the village committee members involved in the selection of activities. The International Training Centre of ILO continued a project on "Social and civil dialogue for reconstruction and reconciliation" and provided training to Palestinian participants, 38 per cent of whom were female employees of governmental, employers' and workers' organizations as well as national and international organizations. ILO also organized several training workshops for women in trade unions to facilitate their participation in union activities, including election to leadership positions.

29. Activities were undertaken to enhance the capacity of women in financial management. UNIFEM provided training in management, including financial management, leadership and bookkeeping. UNDP organized trainings and workshops on finance, management and law in eight districts in the West Bank to enhance the capacities of newly elected mayors and female members of government. UNIFEM provided on-the-job training to women volunteers and administrative committee members of the Sabaya centres in the West Bank and Gaza Strip,

30. A number of training opportunities were also provided to rural women. In the rural areas of the West Bank, UNIFEM provided academic counselling for women and academic support classes for girls. Eighteen community centres established by UNDP are used as women's centres for capacity development of rural women, legal counselling and income generation. UNIFEM also supported a food security and capacity-building initiative in the Gaza Strip, benefiting 50 women in rural areas by providing them with training and start-up costs for small-scale production projects.

B. Information and communication technology

31. Efforts were made to increase women's equal access to and benefits from information and communication technologies. The UNRWA Department of Education continued to emphasize, inter alia, equal access of Palestinian refugee women to information and communications technologies, encourage gender equality in recruitment and retention policies and build capacity to produce appropriate information content. The World Bank financed the establishment of five multi-purpose community telecentres that provided safe access by women and girls to information and communications services and technologies through the use of female-friendly office hours, discount offers for female members, a comfortable visiting environment, and a regular focus on female non-formal education opportunities.

32. Through the Sabaya Programme, UNIFEM supported an electronic discussion among rural women aimed at building their capacity to use the Internet as a form of communication and expression, and as a means of collecting and processing data and information relevant to their needs. The use of information technology serves to

overcome movement restrictions imposed upon women by military occupation and by societal customs.

33. UNESCO reported that 28 female journalists and media professionals from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Palestinian Authority participated in a training workshop on the topic "Use of ICT in media for female journalists", held in Jordan in August 2007. The workshop included, inter alia, an analysis of current media vehicles for women, the way in which the media is addressing women's needs and gender equality issues.

C. Health

34. During the reporting period, United Nations entities focused on increasing women's access to reproductive health services, psychological counselling, health education and disease prevention programmes, immunizations, and provision of safe water and sanitary facilities. UNFPA provided a range of activities geared towards maintaining the integrity of the health system. Among these were: support to the delivery of reproductive health services through the procurement of reproductive health commodities and equipment for primary health centres and maternity wards; delivery of fuel for the referral system; the transfer of emergency obstetric cases and women with genital cancers; and procurement of generators for eight health centres in Gaza after the destruction of the electrical power grid in Gaza. UNRWA sought to strengthen gender-sensitive health programming by obtaining, where possible, sex-disaggregated data and encouraging gender equality in recruitment and retention policies.

35. Family planning and antenatal care was provided by a number of entities. Approximately 90,000 women received antenatal care in the five fields of UNRWA operations. More than 20,000 women sought family planning guidance for the first time and more than 110,000 women benefited from the service. About 100,000 pregnant women and nursing mothers benefited from the UNRWA food aid programme; up to 95,000 women with diabetes and/or hypertension received care in UNRWA non-communicable disease clinics; and 45,000 women were assisted with admission to hospitals. UNFPA also focused on projects that respond to the needs of youth, including young women's needs emerging from the crisis.

36. Various entities also provided psychosocial counselling to women. For example, UNFPA, in cooperation with the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, implemented a new project with an innovative approach in the field of psychosocial counselling. The UNRWA Community Mental Health Programme in the Gaza Strip provided essential psychosocial support for Palestinian refugees living in situations of protracted violence and armed conflict. UNIFEM provided psychosocial counselling through specialized lectures, group counselling sessions, one-to-one consultations and information dissemination, with over 1,000 women as direct beneficiaries. UNIFEM also set up mobile psychosocial teams that conducted group sessions, individual therapy, home-delivered psychotherapy sessions, life skills trainings and health counselling services, directly benefiting over 2,500 Palestinian women.

37. Health education and training programmes, including on HIV/AIDS, were provided. UNIFEM conducted a specialized training for female school counsellors on sexuality, health and sexual violence with a focus on, inter alia, girls' education,

including awareness-raising sessions on sexual violence. Sexual health education sessions for university students and youth, aimed at raising their awareness of HIV/AIDS and the vulnerability of women, were also supported. Health education programmes on the prevention of tobacco use, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases were promoted by UNRWA.

38. Another important area of support from United Nations entities was vaccination programmes. UNRWA continued to offer women and children full immunization coverage against vaccine-preventable diseases. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in Gaza in producing vaccination record cards for approximately 140,000 infants and pregnant women, procuring emergency primary health-care kits, including obstetrics, midwifery, first aid, and baby and family hygiene kits. UNICEF also provided tetanus vaccines for 75,000 women of reproductive age, and promoted breastfeeding and appropriate child feeding practices.

39. Taking into account that women and girls have the major responsibility for collecting water for household use and often lack decent sanitation facilities, UNICEF focused on extending access to safe water and decent sanitation facilities in order to improve the situation of women and girls, including at school. UNICEF provided daily drinking water to 343 schools and 32 health facilities across Gaza, and is constructing or rehabilitating sanitation facilities at 52 schools and 8 clinics. In addition to constructing wells and water networks, UNICEF distributed 450 water tanks to rural families, and 6 mobile water tanks to Gaza municipalities.

D. Employment and entrepreneurship

40. Entities initiated or continued training for job placement, created employment opportunities and supported projects aimed at income generation and entrepreneurship. Joint initiatives, including research projects, were also undertaken by United Nations entities. ILO supported the project "Job placement for graduates of vocational programmes", which aims to stimulate employment and income generation opportunities for 140 unemployed new graduates from Palestinian industrial/vocational schools and Ministry of Labour vocational training centres. The participation of women was 26 per cent in Gaza and 38 per cent in the West Bank, and 55 per cent of the total trainees received permanent jobs.

41. The Occupied Palestinian Territory was included in the ILO-led regional programme "Gender equality and workers' rights in the informal economies of the Arab States" (2006-2008), a joint initiative of the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research, the International Development Research Centre and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations. The two-year initiative consists of three interlinked components: research, training, and policy advocacy. During the research phase, two regional background papers on statistics and social protection and five country case studies (Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory), were produced and discussed during a research workshop held in Tunis in April 2007. Three Palestinian researchers developed a country case study that focuses on extending social protection to workers in the informal economy from gender equality and workers' rights perspectives. Currently the project is entering the training phase, which will culminate in a regional training on social protection and

statistics in the informal economy. The third component on policy advocacy will focus on specific policy briefs and round tables addressing policymakers and think tanks.

42. The International Labour Organization committed $1 million for the establishment of the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection. The Fund serves as the institutional framework for resource mobilization and for social and economic development in three core programme areas: community infrastructure, enterprise and human resources. In August 2007, the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States fielded a multidisciplinary mission to the Occupied Palestinian Territory to formulate technical cooperation strategies aimed at poverty reduction and the promotion of decent and productive employment for Palestinians, with special emphasis on youth and women.

43. Initiatives, including joint initiatives, were undertaken with a view to building the capacity of key stakeholders in fostering women's entrepreneurship. The Empretec programme of UNCTAD and ILO aims to support the development of small and medium-size enterprises, through building institutional capacity for establishing a dynamic private sector and internationally competitive enterprises. Of the 123 trainees who graduated, 16 per cent were women, representing leading industries and services across the West Bank. A round-table meeting for the Chairmen and Senior Executives of the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and its 14 member chambers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, supported by ILO, aimed to improve the role of employers' organizations in employment creation, particularly through the promotion of small and medium enterprises, with a special focus on strengthening and empowering women's entrepreneurship.

44. As women microentrepreneurs are among the poorest members of communities, credit to these women constitutes a fundamental source of capital that enables them to meet the basic needs of their families. During the reporting period, UNRWA disbursed over 38,000 solidarity group loans, valued at over $25 million, to women microentrepreneurs in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Agency also provided over 5,500 consumer loans, worth over $3.2 million, to working-class families in the Gaza Strip with no access to bank loans. In June 2006, UNRWA had a portfolio of more than 13,600 loans in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, valued at over $9.6 million, 20 per cent of which were held by women clients.

45. With a view to enhancing the role of Palestinian women in the improvement of national food security and the agricultural industry, FAO supported the continuation of the project "Support to household food security and income generation through bio-intensive backyard agricultural production and cottage industry activities for women in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip", started in 2006. To date, some 180 women have participated in intensive training in food preservation and processing, with a focus on market orientation. Fifty women were selected for the intensive "backyard production" component that includes grey-water recycling facilities to overcome limited water supply.

46. United Nations entities reported on efforts to create work for women, including through programmes and projects at the community level. UNRWA created an estimated 1.8 million days of temporary work under its direct-hire programme and community-based infrastructure and construction projects to help

beneficiaries to maintain minimum levels of income and support their families. In the Gaza Strip and West Bank, 17 per cent of the beneficiaries were female heads of household. In 2006, UNESCO submitted to the Islamic Development Bank, a $2.8 million programme focused on generating job opportunities for young women and men, through revitalizing cultural heritage sites of old cities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Through various programmes and projects implemented during the reporting period, UNIFEM created employment opportunities for over 300 women, mostly from rural areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

47. The importance of including women in economic decision-making was highlighted by UNCTAD, which reported on the election, in 2007, of a leading Palestinian businesswoman to the Board that oversees a project entitled "Establishment of the Palestinian Shippers Council (PSC)", launched at the beginning of 2006, with the aim of protecting the interests of the Palestinian shipping community of exporters and importers. It was noted that women currently represent 40 per cent of the PSC management team.

48. In April 2007, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process led a joint United Nations system agency evaluation of socio-economic needs in the Jordan Valley, in particular those of women. Through the evaluation, priority areas of intervention were identified that would increase the economic participation of women in their communities. It is envisaged that a joint United Nations programme, coordinated by the Office, will follow towards the end of 2007.

E. Women's human rights

49. Several United Nations entities undertook initiatives focused on protecting and promoting the human rights of Palestinian women and girls, including through advocacy, training, seminars, support to the fulfilment of reporting obligations and preparation of action plans. OHCHR-Palestine, along with various representatives of Palestinian civil society, continued developing advocacy strategies to encourage the incorporation of international human rights standards into the Palestinian legislation and policy, with a special focus on women's rights. In 2007, OHCHR-Palestine conducted advocacy activities with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for Women and Children, on the issue of justice sector reform, emphasizing the need for enhancing women's access to justice and other social support mechanisms. OHCHR-Palestine participated in seminars and discussions addressing specific issues relating to women's rights. The work of relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms and the ways in which NGOs can effectively use such mechanisms, especially Special Procedures, to advance the rights of women were highlighted.

50. During the period under review, significant support was provided to capacity-building on women's human rights. OHCHR-Palestine conducted several trainings on women's human rights. Eight training courses were organized in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for representatives of Palestinian civil society, including human rights organizations and other NGOs. Gender balance was taken into account in the selection of participants and gender perspectives were integrated in the development of the curricula, objectives and goals and monitoring and evaluation. An intensive training of trainers course for Palestinian human rights defenders and activists from human rights organizations was organized. Workshops and training courses were

also organized on women's rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, targeting representatives of Palestinian human rights organizations. In May 2007, OHCHR-Palestine conducted two courses specifically for female participants in the West Bank and Gaza City to educate women's groups on United Nations Special Procedures and the United Nations treaty bodies and submission of communications. Training on gender equality and women's human rights was delivered by UNIFEM to male and female youth members of the "Youth Rights Monitor" project's Palestinian Legislative Council Monitoring Committee and of the project's Media Committee.

51. In close cooperation with OHCHR, UNESCO actively participated in the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education Plan of Action for 2005-2007 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The two entities will collaborate on the first stages of this project aimed at promoting human rights, peace, democratic citizenship, intercultural understanding and human rights education. The initial stage of the project, which analyses the current situation of human rights education in the Palestinian school system, was completed in late 2006.

52. As part of its capacity-building and awareness-raising campaign on women's human rights and violence against women in the Gaza Strip, UNIFEM provided legal counselling and legal literacy services to more than 1,500 women in marginalized areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As executing agency for the United Nations Democracy Fund "Youth Rights Monitor" project, UNIFEM has taken a gender-sensitive approach to monitoring youth rights and in advocacy through the local media.

53. OHCHR-Palestine engaged closely with Palestinian women's organizations in coordinating a unified alternative report for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and participated in various seminars and discussions addressing specific issues related to women's rights, highlighting the work of relevant United Nations human rights mechanisms and how NGOs can effectively use such mechanisms to advance the rights of women.

F. Violence against women

54. The issue of violence against women was taken up by a range of United Nations entities, in collaboration with some Palestinian NGOs. For example, OHCHR-Palestine, UNFPA, WHO and Al-Muntada (Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations against Domestic Violence) organized a series of activities across the Occupied Palestinian Territory in commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. These activities included a countrywide media campaign from 25 November to 10 December 2006. Ten workshops, facilitated by Al-Muntada, were held at various locations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Each workshop focused on gender-based violence and the psychological and social health of women as affected by the current political, social and economic situation confronting the Palestinian society. An advocacy plan was subsequently developed for civil society organizations to ensure that the recommendations would be acted upon. OHCHR-Palestine continued to follow developments in relation to domestic violence against women, including through participation in the initial advocacy campaign launched by civil society

organizations to address the issue. The campaign concluded with the drafting of a plan of action that was formally launched by the Ministry of Women's Affairs in November 2006.

55. UNESCO produced and published a fact sheet on violence against women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which was distributed in December 2006 during the National Campaign on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

G. Humanitarian assistance

56. United Nations entities continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinian women living in refugee camps and disadvantaged villages. Activities included providing food, monetary assistance, creating an environment conducive for learning and providing extracurricular activities.

57. UNRWA provided special assistance to over 1 million refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 45 per cent of whom were female heads of households. The Agency's special hardship assistance provided the poorest families with a critical safety net in the form of food support, selective cash assistance and preferential access to the Agency's vocational training centres, where pupils could learn skills to help to lift their families out of poverty.

58. UNESCO continued its participation in the project "Isolated and disenfranchised communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", funded by the Trust Fund for Human Security. The project aims to address the most urgent needs of Palestinian people living in 14 disadvantaged villages and 2 refugee camps, including through enhancing their learning environment and implementing extracurricular activities, promoting intangible and oral heritage, with special attention to cultural projects with potential for employment generation, and producing informative radio programmes, talk shows and documentaries.

H. Advocacy and information

59. Several United Nations entities carried out advocacy activities, including through meetings, conferences, establishment of databases and research. Entities also collected, analysed and disseminated information on the situation of Palestinian women.

60. The Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political Affairs organized seminars and conferences that included a focus on the situation of Palestinian women. For example, the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in Doha in February 2007, as one of its sub-themes, addressed the plight of the most vulnerable segments of the Palestinian society, including women. The United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Brussels in August 2007, devoted one of its workshops to the topic of the empowerment of women and the role of women's organizations in promoting Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Division also held an annual consultative meeting with civil society organizations, including women representatives. Eighty women's organizations are currently accredited to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In addition, the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the

Government of Japan and the United Nations University, organized an international media seminar entitled "Re-engaging the Israelis and the Palestinians in the search for a comprehensive and lasting political settlement", in Tokyo in June 2007.

61. Several actors were instrumental in organizing activities to mark International Women's Day in 2007. WFP, CHF International (formerly known as the Cooperative Housing Foundation), the Ministry of Agriculture in coordination with UNFPA, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme organized a commemoration of International Women's Day in Gaza in 2007. Activities focused on raising awareness on the theme "Ending impunity for violence against women". In the West Bank, WFP-Occupied Palestinian Territory, in partnership with CHF International and the local committees, organized a celebration of International Women's Day, including the opening of two exhibitions, of Food for Training products produced by women beneficiaries of the WFP Food for Training programme.

62. Research and documentation, including through databases, on the situation of Palestinian women were supported by a number of United Nations entities. Through its Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre, UNESCO commissioned, collected, analysed and disseminated research on gender equality and the human rights of women. The Centre developed online databases, produced publications, organized training courses and targeted seminars to ministries, NGOs, students and researchers. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs gathered information and documents on emerging gender issues through field networks and in collaboration with other humanitarian and development actors to inform its gender advocacy on women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Division for Palestinian Rights continued to update and expand the documents collection on Palestinian women in the Internet-based United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL). In addition, the UNESCO Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre published a documentary study entitled "Deferent roles of Palestinian women in the thirties and the forties: the political participation of Palestinian women". The two editions were launched on 12 October 2006.

63. In order to raise awareness about the situation of Palestinian women in rural areas, UNIFEM continued to support the development of a database used by the Sabaya women's centres to gather and update information on resources and services accessible to women within rural communities. During 2007, UNIFEM analysed data gathered from the 18 areas of implementation of its Sabaya Programme and developed relevant indicators on rural women. These indicators serve as a crucial tool for raising awareness about rural women's needs among decision makers and service providers.

64. Film was also used as an advocacy tool to bring attention to the situation of women in the region. UNIFEM supported the production of an advocacy short documentary film, entitled *Maria's Grotto* on the issue of femicide in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, filmed in the West Bank by the Palestinian filmmaker Buthina Khouri. The screenings of the film *Divorce — the Iranian Way*, in 18 rural communities through the Sabaya centres were also supported by UNIFEM. Over 660 women attended these film screenings and participated in the ensuing discussion sessions on women's rights.

65. The Department of Public Information reported a special information programme on the "Question of Palestine", aimed at sensitizing public opinion on this issue. The English Unit of United Nations Radio filed 10 news stories and 5 feature stories on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including on the situation of Palestinian women. The Arabic Unit of United Nations Radio covered the situation of, and assistance to, Palestinian women through news, features and in its weekly programme on women. Through a special feature page, entitled "News Focus: Middle East", the Department maintains easy access to information materials on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, including two web-only articles entitled "A difficult future for the Gaza Strip", by Jonas Hagen, dated 25 January 2007, and "Gaza border closures accompanied by fears of humanitarian crisis", by Sana Aftab Khan, dated 2 August 2007.

66. The Department of Public Information drew attention to the situation of Palestinian women through its publications, press conferences and briefings and seminars. In addition to the *UN Chronicle* magazine (issue 1, 2007), its monthly compilation entitled "Chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine", and the bimonthly newsletter NGO Action News, the Department of Public Information also reported that the United Nations Information Service in Geneva organized three press conferences and biweekly briefings on matters pertaining to Palestinian women: the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Occupied Palestinian Territory in November 2006.

I. Gender mainstreaming

67. A number of United Nations entities initiated activities to strengthen gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes, including at the country level. the UNDP "In-house gender mainstreaming capacity development" initiative aims to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in programmes and operational activities of the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People. UNDP also promoted the incorporation of gender perspectives into the development strategy of a participatory rural development and planning project from its inception. FAO supported a project on "Mainstreaming gender dimensions into water resources development and management in the Mediterranean region (GEWAMED)", coordinated by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari and financed by the European Commission. The project was designed to build a national and regional shared knowledge base on gender equality issues, policies and related actions; to enhance dialogue among the countries of the Mediterranean region; and to contribute to the adoption of national gender-oriented policies and other related instruments. FAO, IFAD and the Gender and Water Alliance are members of the Consultation and Advisory Gender Committee of the project.

68. Other entities adopted policies and employed specialists to advance gender mainstreaming. UNRWA adopted a Policy for Gender Equality to achieve gender mainstreaming in operations and service delivery. The Agency's assistance to Palestinian refugee women focuses on meeting their human development needs in the areas of education and technical training, female-focused basic health care, and the provision of microfinance.

69. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, requested the deployment of a Gender Adviser to support the work of the United Nations country team in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in preparing an analysis of the main gender inequality issues and concerns on the ground. The Gender Adviser would also identify gaps in the current programmes/activities, assess the quality and effectiveness of the existing gender equality programmes in the different sectors' humanitarian response, and identify strategies to overcome any deficiencies.

70. During 2006-2007, the ESCWA Centre for Women provided technical cooperation and advisory services to the Palestinian Ministry for Women's Affairs on gender mainstreaming and strategic planning.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

71. **During the period under review, the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory deepened. The conflict and intra-Palestinian violence continued to have a detrimental effect on all Palestinian people. The international financial embargo, the withholding of Palestinian revenues by Israel and the suspension of direct budget support from donors have led to a further deterioration of the situation.**

72. **The situation of Palestinian women was directly affected by increased poverty and unemployment and the decline in living standards and food security. The movement of women and girls was restricted by closures, checkpoints and roadblocks, as well as the permit system, which limited their access to health-care services, employment and schools. Close to 30 per cent of pregnant women in the West Bank had difficulties accessing antenatal care and safe delivery. Both primary and secondary services have declined. Continuing declines in the education system were marked by high dropout rates, a wide gap between girls completing primary school and those enrolling in secondary school, and low graduation rates. Violence against women, especially domestic violence, remained a widespread problem.**

73. **In its resolution 61/143, the General Assembly highlighted violence against women as both a human rights violation and a constraint to development and called for accelerated efforts to eradicate such violence. In the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-first session, the Commission called for the elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Enhanced efforts are needed to eliminate all forms of violence against Palestinian women and girls and to protect and promote their human rights, including through systematic and effective utilization of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.**

74. **Improving the situation of and enhancing the impact of assistance to Palestinian women is linked to the achievement of a secure and lasting peace. Renewed efforts need to be made by the international community to seek an end to the violent confrontations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Women should be fully involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives to be undertaken in the region, in**

accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

75. **United Nations entities should continue to operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the refugee camps. Assistance focused on the empowerment of women, particularly in areas such as education, health, social welfare, employment and economic development, should be strengthened. Enhanced efforts should also be made to increase women's full participation in decision-making processes at all levels.**

76. **A gender perspective should be fully integrated into international assistance programmes, through, inter alia, gender analysis and the collection of sex-disaggregated data. All studies and reports undertaken by the United Nations on the situation of the Palestinian people should incorporate specific attention to gender perspectives. Governments, academic institutions, international organizations, and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, should be encouraged to collaborate on qualitative and quantitative action-oriented research on the situation of Palestinian women and girls.**

77. **Member States, entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should intensify their efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women and systematically assess and report on the impact of those efforts.**

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Release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is prepared in response to the request contained in Commission on the Status of Women resolution 50/1. It includes information provided by Member States and relevant entities of the United Nations system and provides a recommendation for consideration by the Commission at its fifty-second session in 2008.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fiftieth session in 2006, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted resolution 50/1 on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts. In that resolution, the Commission expressed grave concern at the continuation of armed conflicts in many regions of the world and the human suffering and humanitarian emergencies they had caused. The Commission recognized that hostage-taking called for resolute, firm and concerted efforts on the part of the international community, in conformity with international humanitarian law and in accordance with international human rights standards, in order to bring such abhorrent practices to an end.

2. The Commission expressed its strong belief that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflict would promote the implementation of the noble goals enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[2] as well as the outcome document of the special session of the Assembly on children,[3] entitled "A world fit for children", including the provisions therein regarding violence against women and children.

3. The Commission strongly urged all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law in armed conflict and to take all necessary measures for the protection of the civilian population as such, and to release immediately all women and children who had been taken hostage. The Secretary-General was requested to ensure the widest possible dissemination of all relevant material, in particular material relating to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), within existing resources.

4. All relevant international organizations were also requested to use their capabilities and undertake efforts to facilitate the immediate release of civilian women and children who had been taken hostage. The Commission also emphasized the importance of objective, responsible and impartial information, including sex-disaggregated data, on hostages, verifiable by relevant international organizations, in facilitating their release, and called for assistance to those organizations in that regard.

5. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Commission at its fifty-second session a report on the implementation of resolution 50/1, including relevant recommendations, taking into account the information provided by States and relevant international organizations. The present report is prepared in compliance with that request and is based on information received from six Member States, 12 entities of the United Nations system and one international organization.

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[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] General Assembly resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/2, annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution S-27/2, annex.

II. Information from Member States

6. The Governments of Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Lebanon and Yemen responded to the request to provide information regarding the status of implementation of resolution 50/1.

7. The Government of Azerbaijan emphasized that it remained strongly committed to the provisions of resolution 50/1. It supported the view that the rapid and unconditional release of women and children taken hostage in areas of armed conflicts would contribute considerably to the implementation of the goals outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. In order to find Azerbaijani missing persons and hostages and seek their release, the State Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons and its working group were established in 1993 by presidential decree. The State Commission's activity is guided by the norms and principles of international law, especially the Geneva Conventions of 1949, relevant resolutions of the Assembly and other documents adopted by United Nations human rights bodies. The Government reported that, as of 2007, 4,471 citizens of Azerbaijan had been declared missing, of whom 51 were children and 278 were women. A total of 1,391 people were released from Armenian captivity, of whom 168 were children and 343 were women. The Government of Azerbaijan indicated that it had at its disposal facts proving that 783 persons, including 18 children and 46 women, had been imprisoned or taken hostage by Armenia. The lists of these people were compiled on the basis of testimonials of citizens returned from captivity and from other sources.

8. The Governments of Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Lebanon and Yemen reported that the situation described in resolution 50/1 was not applicable to their respective countries, as they were not involved in armed conflict.

9. The Government of Bahrain further noted that the constitution and the National Action Charter of Bahrain forbid such actions and that it was party to numerous international conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, Convention against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Arab Charter on Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

III. Information provided by entities of the United Nations system

10. Twelve entities of the United Nations system responded to the request to provide information regarding the status of implementation of resolution 50/1 with

information on their activities.[4] The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also provided information.

11. The Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Health Organization and IOM reported that they did not have any activities related to the implementation of resolution 50/1 during the reporting period 2006-2007.

12. Much of the information provided by the United Nations entities focused more generally on follow-up to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Considerable information was provided on children abducted or taken hostage during armed conflict but little information was available on women taken hostage or imprisoned in armed conflicts.

13. The Department of Public Information issued a press release and produced a United Nations News Centre story at the time resolution 50/1 was adopted, in March 2006.

14. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) noted that the issue of women taken hostage due to armed conflict was important in the ESCWA region. ESCWA referred to its publication *Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women 2000-2006* (E/ESCWA/ECW/2007/technical paper.1), which highlighted the issue of Palestinian women held in Israeli prisons as a result of armed conflict and the impact of custody on their health and development. The report also stated that at least 10,500 Palestinians, including 319 children and 117 women, remained in Israeli custody in 30 detention facilities throughout Israel and in settlements and other military bases in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

15. The ESCWA Committee on Women focused on women and conflict during its sessions in 2006 and 2007. The third session of the Committee in 2007 resulted in several recommendations aimed at creating an enabling environment for protecting women in the contexts of war, hostage-taking and detention. The Committee recommended, inter alia, that protection and support should be provided for women living in conditions of insecurity, war and armed conflict and that programmes should be devised to support women, including in respect of legal aid, basic needs, relief and rehabilitation services, justice and reparations.

16. In the context of its life-saving and livelihood protection programmes to support vulnerable and war-affected civilian communities and displaced populations, the World Food Programme (WFP) supported, inter alia, education and health programmes, "catch-up" schools and vocational training for women. WFP indicated that it had increasingly engaged in assisting ex-combatants and their dependants in demobilization and reintegration efforts. Food rations were provided to programmes aimed at preventing the recruitment of child soldiers, as well as to

[4] The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization.

programmes for demobilization and reintegration of children affiliated with armed forces and groups. WFP pointed out that equal assistance had been given to children who had been forcibly recruited or abducted or who had entered the armed groups voluntarily.

17. In Uganda, WFP provided food rations, counselling and training to children who had been abducted. Orphans and girls who had become pregnant as a result of rape during abduction were also given assistance. WFP highlighted the challenges of protecting women and underage children from being taken hostage during armed conflict, including collection of reliable empirical data for reporting purposes, and ensuring a coordinated, multisectoral approach with the involvement of various actors.

18. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported on its assistance to women and children in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Uganda. UNICEF prevention and assistance activities focused on dialogue with State and non-State actors to advocate the release of abducted children, capacity-building initiatives, including for community-based networks, and the creation of child-friendly spaces.

19. In 2006, UNICEF was involved in the peace talks based in southern Sudan between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and in planning for the transfer of up to 1,500 children and young women from the ranks of LRA. Since then, 70 children, 15 per cent of them girls, were returned from southern Sudan to reception centres in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader and Lira. In these areas, UNICEF deployed international child protection officers to ensure the care and protection of vulnerable children, including internally displaced persons, former abductees and children seeking safety at night in urban centres. UNICEF further developed inter-agency technical guidelines to secure the safe return and reintegration of women and children associated with LRA in southern Sudan. Faith-based organizations received support from UNICEF for lifesaving interventions during the movements of the children to the assembly areas in southern Sudan. In addition, UNICEF trained and deployed 20 social workers to the designated Assembly Areas and set up an inter-agency database to facilitate the provision of immediate care, family tracing and reunification. UNICEF also continued to support its child protection partner in Kitgum, Concerned Parents Association, in providing mentorship as well as life skills and conflict mitigation training to children who had been abducted and other vulnerable children from internally displaced persons camps.

20. In 2006, UNICEF supported the social and economic reintegration of 92 per cent of the targeted 10,000 demobilized children, either through informal skills training or formal education through the Community Education Investment Programme. In that process, 582 schools with a total student population of 85,867 have benefited from the educational and recreational materials provided by UNICEF. UNICEF also built the capacity of about 6,000 members of community-based support networks, such as child welfare committees, to facilitate the reintegration of demobilized children. At the same time, the border monitoring project worked to enhance child protection along the borders by building the capacity of communities to monitor, report and respond to the abduction and recruitment of children.

21. In 2006, in collaboration with partnering organizations, UNICEF facilitated the release of over 1,200 children from armed forces groups, as well as their reintegration into their communities. In northern Sudan, 211 children recruited into armed groups were released and reunited with their families during the year. In southern Sudan, 1,004 children were removed from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and from other armed groups and 500 of them were reunited with their families by the end of the year, as a result of family tracing by the southern Sudan family tracing network. In 2007, UNICEF worked with the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, along with Government and United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, to build local capacity for the demobilization of children associated with armed forces. To that end, UNICEF helped to train a child soldier identification and registration team in Bentiu and conducted a three-day family tracing and reunification workshop in Nyal, Unity State, for the expected demobilization of nearly 100 children from SPLA. Although UNICEF and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan have been in dialogue with other militias, such as the Sudan Liberation Army, no concrete steps have been taken to release children being held by the groups.

22. In order to protect vulnerable children and prevent their recruitment or re-recruitment into militias, UNICEF has provided training on livelihood opportunities to 400 adolescents and has created child-friendly spaces within internally displaced persons camps, thus allowing 183,000 children to access psychosocial support activities. UNICEF has also supported the training of 2,736 African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) observers and police on child rights and protection within the inter-agency capacity-building programme for AMIS troops in Darfur. In 2007, UNICEF provided training to Save the Children social workers to care for 211 demobilized children and 200 vulnerable children in southern Kordofan.

23. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF provided direct assistance (psychosocial, educational, medical, food assistance and family reintegration) to 7,188 children in 2006, more than 1,400 of whom had formerly been associated with armed groups, within the framework of the prevention, demobilization and reinsertion programme. At the same time, more than 6,000 adolescents associated with armed groups were sensitized on HIV/AIDS prevention and 20 child protection focal points were appointed and trained within the Forces de défense et de sécurités des Forces nouvelles (FDS-FN). Following UNICEF and United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire advocacy, decisive action plans were signed with FDS-FN and other militias to stop underage recruitment and to identify and demobilize all children in their ranks. In 2007, there was no further recruitment of children by armed groups. UNICEF further supported FDS-FN by setting up focal points within the militia, which resulted in the identification and registration of 204 children, including 84 girls.

24. In Somalia, UNICEF led a community and inter-agency child protection monitoring and reporting system in 2006 as a mechanism for investigating six egregious violations, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). The results of the investigation by 30 trained monitors led to joint advocacy to address recruitment of children into militias. UNICEF noted, however, that the capacity of partners and community-based groups to monitor and respond to child protection violations remained limited and needed to be strengthened.

25. UNICEF continued to maintain a database on recruitment of children into armed groups in Sri Lanka, a proven effective advocacy tool for the release of underage recruits, and conducted negotiations and received individual commitments from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Karuna faction and the Government of Sri Lanka to develop appropriate action plans to enact recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Sri Lanka (S/2006/1006). In March 2007, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam developed an action plan in response to these efforts. The UNICEF country task force continued to negotiate to further improve its content and to secure commitment to respecting the criteria contained in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

26. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF also started child protection coordination meetings at the national and district levels in 2006 to address the issue of separated and unaccompanied children and the risks of recruitment and abduction by armed groups.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

27. **The present report is based on the responses of six Member States and inputs received from 12 entities of the United Nations system. Only one Member State provided information on women taken hostage or imprisoned in armed conflict. Much of the information provided by the United Nations focused more generally on follow-up to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Little information was provided on the release of women taken hostage or imprisoned in armed conflict. Most information provided was focused on the support provided to children demobilized from situations of forced recruitment into armed forces. The Commission on the Status of Women may wish to invite the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict to take into account the release of children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts and provide sex-disaggregated data, where available, when preparing the reports requested by the General Assembly.**

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Joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a review of the implementation of the 2007 joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also contains the joint workplan for 2008.

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

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I. Introduction

1. On the basis of Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint workplan is prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The workplan for 2007 is contained in document A/HRC/4/68-E/CN.6/2007/5.

2. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued in 2007 with the goal of achieving equality between women and men and the promotion and protection of women's human rights. The major activities that were carried out jointly are outlined below, as are plans for joint activities for 2008.

II. Review of the implementation of the joint workplan for 2007

A. General

3. During the implementation of the current joint workplan, the exchange of information continued between OHCHR, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Division and OHCHR continued to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, especially the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. OHCHR and the Division participated in the sixth session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality from 21 to 22 February 2007 in New York, contributing to discussions on all items on the agenda. Both entities participated actively in several of the task forces of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, including its task force on violence against women, for which the Division and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as co-convenors. The task force aims to ensure a coordinated follow-up to General Assembly resolution 61/143 entitled "Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women" and the implementation of recommendations of the study. OHCHR also contributed an input to the inventory of activities of the United Nations system on violence against women, compiled by the Division as part of the activities of the task force on violence against women.

4. Both entities participated in the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as in decision-making concerning grants by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The Division and OHCHR also collaborated within the context of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, specifically in the cluster on the advancement of women, for which the Division, together with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), serves as cluster leader.

5. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to exchange documents, reports and information relating to the work of the human

rights treaty bodies, including concluding observations, comments, general recommendations and views relating to communications, and circulated those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. As part of its efforts to disseminate the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1), the Division wrote to all members of human rights treaty bodies bringing the study to their attention and encouraging their continued attention to that issue.

6. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to update their databases and websites, and the Division regularly followed up with OHCHR on progress in updating the treaty body database. OHCHR and the Division disseminated information about the human rights treaty system, including on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

B. Support for human rights treaty bodies

7. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to support the work of human rights treaty bodies and implementation of the major international human rights instruments. Work to support the reform of the treaty body system also continued.

8. On 15 January 2007, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held an exchange of views with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on issues of common interest, and in particular on the decision of 11 October 2006 by the Secretary-General to transfer responsibility for servicing the Committee to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also delivered a statement on 23 July 2007 at the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the work of the Committee.

9. OHCHR attended briefings convened by the Division for entities of the United Nations system in advance of the sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. OHCHR also contributed to the preparation of joint reports by United Nations country teams that were submitted to the Committee. OHCHR continued to provide information on the working methods of the six human rights treaty bodies serviced by OHCHR for the reports prepared by the Division for the Committee on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, a regular item on the agenda of the Committee.

10. The Division for the Advancement of Women contributed to documentation prepared for the sixth Inter-Committee Meeting and the nineteenth meeting of the chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies, which took place in Geneva, from 18 to 20 June and 21 to 22 June 2007, respectively. In particular, the Division provided input into the report on working methods of the treaty bodies (see HRI/MC/2007/4). The Division staff participated in both meetings, as did the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women supported treaty bodies in their follow-up to the recommendations of the nineteenth meeting of chairpersons of human rights treaty bodies and the sixth Inter-Committee Meeting.

11. During the year, OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women, respectively, convened a number of meetings, including training seminars and other

capacity-building activities, to support implementation of human rights treaties, including concluding observations and comments at the national level.

12. Two staff members from the Division for the Advancement of Women supported the informal working session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in Geneva from 24 to 26 October 2007, hosted by the Government of Switzerland. The Division provided a draft provisional agenda and background material for use at the informal session.

13. The Division for the Advancement of Women prepared a transition note for OHCHR aimed at ensuring the smooth transfer of servicing of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to OHCHR. The note provided detailed information on relevant work processes; gave an update on the current status in all relevant work areas; provided background information that may be relevant for servicing of the Committee; and listed actions to be taken by each office in all relevant areas.

C. Interaction with special procedures mandate holders

14. The Division for the Advancement of Women continued its interaction with special procedures mandate holders. In particular, the Division maintained contact with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in the follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women. The work of the Special Rapporteur towards the development of a set of indicators with a particular focus on measuring State responses to combat violence against women, was presented at an expert group meeting convened by the Division from 8 to 10 October 2007, co-organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Economic Commission for Europe Statistics Division and the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with ECA, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Representatives of OHCHR also participated in that meeting.

15. The Division continued to liaise with the independent expert guiding the United Nations Study on violence against children on follow-up to the Study.

D. Support for intergovernmental bodies

16. The President of the Human Rights Council addressed the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-first session in March 2007.

17. Coordination of the preparation of reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies continued. OHCHR provided an input to the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2008/6), and on ending female genital mutilation (E/CN.6/2008/3), both of which will be submitted to the Commission at its fifty-second session. OHCHR contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system, submitted to the Economic and Social Council (see E/2007/64) as well as to the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in

follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (see A/62/178).

III. Joint workplan for 2008

18. Several recent developments will shape future cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women, including the implementation of the decision of the Secretary-General to transfer responsibility for supporting the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to OHCHR in Geneva as of 1 January 2008 and related transfer of four posts at the professional level (2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 1 P-2) and one post at the General Service level (see the programme budget for 2008-2009, sections 9 and 23), as well as the establishment in OHCHR of a Women's Human Rights and Gender Unit, pursuant to the High Commissioner's action and strategic management plans. The Secretary-General's follow-up to the recommendation of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence to establish one United Nations entity focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, and any action Member States may take thereon, will also impact on such future cooperation. Accordingly, OHCHR and the Division will keep the joint workplan for 2008 under review and update it as necessary during the coming year.

A. Promotion of the human rights of women and mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the field of human rights

19. Following the transfer of responsibilities for servicing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to OHCHR, the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to implement its mandated responsibilities with regard to women's human rights in follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and other relevant mandates. The Division will cooperate with OHCHR and exchange information of relevance in support of the work of human rights treaty bodies and enhanced mainstreaming of gender perspectives in their work.

20. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will continue to support the participation of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the President of the Human Rights Council in each other's sessions and the participation of the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

21. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will continue to seek input and provide comments for reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies and special procedures, as relevant. The Division will continue to monitor progress with respect to integrating gender perspectives in the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies.

22. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will exchange information and cooperate on follow-up to any actions the Commission on the

Status of Women will take at its fifty-second session as well as any actions the Human Rights Council will take in 2008, as relevant. The Division and OHCHR will also intensify proactive exchange of information and seek to collaborate in assisting the Human Rights Council to integrate gender perspectives in its work, including during panel discussions and side events, and OHCHR will regularly provide information about the Council's work programme and related documentation.

B. Technical cooperation, advisory services and meetings

23. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will improve early information exchange and coordination on technical cooperation activities, in particular by sharing plans for such activities, and cooperate whenever possible in such activities. Staff from each entity will be invited to contribute to and participate in relevant workshops, as appropriate. OHCHR will also invite the Division to participate in relevant meetings of the field representatives of OHCHR.

24. The Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to participate as a member of the reference group for the Action 2 global programme on strengthening United Nations support for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

C. Awareness-raising and outreach

25. The Division for the Advancement of Women maintained a page on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with a dedicated page per session of the Committee, up until and including the thirty-ninth session. The Division will establish a link to the website of OHCHR to refer users to that site for all information pertaining to the fortieth and subsequent sessions of the Committee. It will continue to provide information on its site about all developments in the area of women's human rights, including a link to the WomenWatch portal.

D. Inter-agency cooperation

26. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, as well as to work together to advance gender equality and respect for women's human rights.

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Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women to eliminate violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council the report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 50/166.

Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the fund to eliminate violence against women

1. In its resolution 50/166, the General Assembly mandated the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to strengthen its activities to eliminate violence against women in order to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[1] That resolution is also the founding resolution of the United Nations Trust Fund in

* E/CN.6/2007/L.6.

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

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Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, which was set up in 1996 and became operational in 1997, with UNIFEM as its administrator. The resolution positioned the Trust Fund as a key inter-agency grant-making mechanism to support local, national and international work by Governments and non-governmental organizations to end violence against women. In administering the Trust Fund, UNIFEM has established consultative mechanisms with a wide range of United Nations partners and leading experts on gender-based violence as part of system-wide efforts to eliminate violence against women.

2. The present report, to the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the seventh session of the Human Rights Council, documents the activities undertaken by UNIFEM in 2007 as administrator of the Trust Fund as well as its programming on violence against women.

Background and context

3. Since the 1990s, the right of women and girls to be free from violence has been recognized as an international human right, and Member States have adopted a number of intergovernmental resolutions in which they commit to preventing and eliminating gender-based violence. Most recently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/133, called on the international community, including the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, to support national efforts to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality in order to enhance national efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls. The international community has recognized, in a series of agreements reached and resolutions adopted since the 1990s, that violence against women not only is one of the most systematic and pervasive human rights violations, but also erodes women's health, productivity and capacity to act, to the detriment of countries' efforts to overcome poverty and foster equitable development.

4. As affirmed by the Millennium Project Tax Force on Education and Gender Equality in its report,[2] freedom from violence, especially for girls and women, is a core right essential to their ability to lead a productive life. Violence against women and girls dampens prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction, gender equality, health and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. In the context of the global consensus on the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment, both as an objective in itself and as central to achieving all of the Millennium Development Goals, a number of factors in the current policy context are also conducive to the achievement of significant progress on the issue of violence against women and girls. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women,[3] an increasing number of governments have enacted national laws and adopted plans of action on the issue. In addition, a growing number of non-governmental research institutions and other civil society organizations are taking on the issue of violence against women as an integral part of their mission. It is also important to note that United Nations reform and its emphasis on "Delivering as one" (see A/61/582) is also galvanizing an increasing number of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and

[2] United Nations Millennium Project, Task Force on Education and General Equality (Earthscan, London and Sterling, Virginia, 2005).

[3] See A/61/122/Add.1 for a global scan of the status of policies and laws.

prompting them to intensify their work on the issue of gender-based violence, both collectively and within the scope of their own mandates.

5. The greatest achievements in the course of the last decade have been in the areas of awareness-raising and standard-setting. The challenge of the current decade lies in ensuring respect for and the effective implementation of existing human rights standards and in making certain that the root causes and consequences of violence against women are tackled at all levels, from the home to the transnational arena, as called for by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women. The multiplicity of forms of violence against women and girls, as well as the fact that such violence frequently occurs at the intersection of gender and other forms of discrimination, makes the adoption of multifaceted strategies to effectively prevent and combat gender-based violence a necessity (see E/CN.4/2006/61). At the midpoint between the United Nations Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) and the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, increased momentum in this priority area is essential.

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

6. Since its inception, the Trust Fund has been a key global mechanism for catalysing change and demonstrating model strategies to end violence against women. The occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Trust Fund, commemorated by UNIFEM with an event held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in February 2007, celebrated the effective work of grantees while advocating for the scaling up of proven strategies. Eminent speakers included the Deputy Secretary-General; the President of Liberia (through a video message); UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman, participating via a live video feed; and Trust Fund grantees. Media advocacy materials on the Trust Fund, including a booklet, film and video spot, were widely disseminated.

7. Trust Fund current strategic directions for the period 2005-2008 are fully in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women, which called for greater attention to implementation of existing human rights standards, multisectoral approaches, strengthened monitoring and evaluation, and strong institutional mechanisms at the local, national, regional and international levels to ensure action, coordination, monitoring and accountability. In addition, in its resolution 61/143, the General Assembly called upon Member States to increase significantly their voluntary financial support for activities related to preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women, including the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women.

8. In this context, the Trust Fund is glad to report that it has met its target of $10 million in contributions in 2007 and has set a goal of $20 million for 2008.

9. In implementing its 2005-2008 strategy, the Trust Fund has been able to demonstrate positive initial results with respect to four of its key pillars, as described below.

Enhancing impact

10. By focusing on support for the implementation of national laws, policies and action plans on ending violence against women, the Trust Fund, through its grant-making, has been able to bridge serious gaps between laws and action plans on the one hand and their implementation on the other at both the national and local levels. Grantees' strategies include building an awareness of new laws and policies; working with the criminal and civil justice systems to develop internal procedures for investigations and restraining orders; enhancing the capacities of judiciaries, law enforcement and health workers; mobilizing communities, including men and marginalized groups, to translate such laws and plans into effect and promote their conformity with human rights standards; advocating for adequate budgetary allocations for the implementation of existing laws and policies; creating data-collection systems and indicators at the national and local levels to assist in monitoring such policies and laws; and building momentum through targeted mass media campaigns. A more detailed overview of grantees' work under the 2007 and earlier implementation windows can be found below.

Deepening involvement

11. Trust Fund grantees have supported broad-based partnerships and multi-stakeholder alliances across a range of actors, from governments and non-governmental organizations, to the private sector, parliamentarians, religious and community leaders, and the media. Several grantees have also established multiagency committees and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms to build stronger accountability mechanisms with key stakeholders. In addition, the Trust Fund has fostered greater coordination and coherence among global and regional partners, including in the formulation of policies and decision-making on grants.

12. In 2007, UNIFEM convened 19 inter-agency programme appraisal committees at the global and regional levels involving a total of 21 United Nations entities and several leading experts on ending violence against women.[4] United Nations entities that participated in Trust Fund decision-making in 2007 include the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Labour Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Department for Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. In addition,

[4] In 2007, programme appraisal committees were held in Nairobi, Accra, Freetown, Johannesburg (South Africa), Kigali, Bangkok, Suva, Kathmandu, Amman, Rabat, Mexico City, Brasília, Quito, Christ Church (Barbados), Bratislava and New York (United States of America), covering Africa, Asia, Pacific and Arab States, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone and three United Nations Resident Coordinators (Colombia, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)) also took part in the regional programme appraisal committees.

13. Member States and private-sector and other donors have increased their contributions to the Trust Fund, resulting in a more than tenfold increase over the past four years and in a grant allocation of close to $5 million in 2007. Despite this expansion in the resource base, however, the demand for Trust Fund support continues to be enormous, with more than $100 million in requests received in 2007. Donors to the Trust Fund in 2007 include the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States of America, and UNIFEM national committees in Iceland, Switzerland and the United States. In addition, the Trust Fund has benefited from partnerships with the private sector. With the support of Johnson & Johnson, a special window on the interlinkage between violence against women and HIV/AIDS was opened in 2005, and a knowledge cohort of select grantees was set up in 2007. In addition, there have been other modest contributions from private-sector partners such as TAG Heuer, Omega and London-based advertising agency Leo Burnett.[5] Contributors in 2007 also included non-profit organizations Zonta International and the Transition Network as well as many individual donors who contributed on the occasion of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Trust Fund.

14. Beyond contributing resources, United Nations Member States also draw on Trust Fund expertise and experiences to reduce violence against women. UNIFEM involves Member States and donors in its public-information initiatives to raise awareness on emerging issues and effective strategies. That relationship is often enhanced through the good offices of grantees as well as through UNIFEM national committees and their partners.

15. The work of the Trust Fund has also been replicated at the regional and national levels in projects that are generating their own resources and grant-making. The Arab States trust fund for the empowerment of women, which is concluding its operations in 2007, facilitated networking and cross-regional learning among grantees. Two initiatives supported in 2006-2007 included the development of an advocacy network to end violence against women in south-eastern Morocco and awareness-raising among unions and civil society on sexual harassment in the workplace through the production of information, education and communication materials, including a documentary film, in Tunisia.[6] In Afghanistan, a Special Fund for the Elimination of Violence against Women was created in 2007. Managed by UNIFEM in partnership with the ministries of women's affairs and of education, civil society partners, UNFPA and UNHCR, the fund will support initiatives that focus on developing the national capacity to prevent sexual and gender-based

[5] The Leo Burnett agency has developed a public service announcement on ending violence against women and supported an Internet campaign (http://www.saynotoviolence.org/), launched in November 2007, to raise public awareness around the globe.

[6] The Arab States Trust Fund was designed as a two-year funding mechanism and was extended for an additional year. It has been supported by contributions from the Government of Germany.

violence and to protect and provide services to women and girl survivors or at risk of violence.[7]

Ensuring efficiency

16. The Trust Fund offers an efficient and transparent mechanism for channelling resources to efforts aimed at ending violence against women and contributing to effective approaches in that respect that have the potential for scale-up at the national levels, which is especially relevant in the context of new aid modalities. Since its inception, the Trust Fund has awarded more than $19 million in grants to 263 projects in 115 countries. Operational efficiency is secured by minimizing staffing and administrative expenses at the headquarters level and by ensuring a strong emphasis on decentralized operations in order to ensure that contributions are forwarded to country programming. The devolution of the decision-making process to regional inter-agency programme appraisal committees, whose members are more in tune with national realities and best placed to determine grantee relevance and contributions to in-country priorities, has offered additional opportunities to establish linkages and synergies with other ongoing national programmes and efforts. As resources and contributions to the Trust Fund have increased, and with a view to supporting meaningful and sustainable programming, the Fund is making larger, longer-term grants for a period of two to three years.

Addressing sustainable knowledge and capacity development

17. A key priority is enhancing systems and capacities among Trust Fund grantees to use evaluation as a means of strengthening the evidence base for effective approaches. Building on the evaluation methodology of Trust Fund projects that was developed in 2006 in partnership with the World Bank, the Trust Fund is currently devising an evaluation strategy and plan on the basis of cutting-edge evaluation approaches and methodologies that support replication and upscaling. It is expected to be completed early in 2008, following due consultations with the Trust Fund's global inter-agency project appraisal committee.

18. In June 2007, the Trust Fund, in collaboration with the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS and UNFPA, convened a state-of-the-art expert consultation on evaluation approaches to ending violence against women and its intersection with HIV/AIDS which brought together leading evaluation experts, United Nations partners and a knowledge cohort of eight Trust Fund grantees[8] to discuss the findings of selected evaluations of interventions and to highlight trends, approaches and challenges in evaluation methodologies. That was followed by a hands-on programme and evaluation design workshop that provided technical assistance with a view to enhancing grantee monitoring and evaluation frameworks and facilitating targeted global knowledge generation. A global evaluation plan has been designed to support each programme's contribution to a common knowledge pool as well as to address cross-cutting questions and lessons learned relating to the intersection of

[7] The Special Fund is being supported by contributions from the Governments of Denmark, Norway, Italy and Switzerland and by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and UNHCR.

[8] Early in 2007, the Trust Fund awarded grants to a cohort of eight programmes as part of the 2006 grant cycle and under the special window on violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Initiatives are being implemented in Botswana, the Dominican Republic, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Viet Nam.

HIV/AIDS and violence against women. The Trust Fund will provide technical and financial support for this process over a period of three years so as to ensure that the lessons learned from this pilot are available to all future projects and shared widely with key stakeholders.

19. Capacity development of Trust Fund grantees was also supported at the subregional level. UNIFEM offices in anglophone West Africa, Central and Eastern Europe and the Pacific facilitated capacity-building workshops for grantees along with other non-governmental organizations working in the region, with a view to strengthening results-based management skills and processes and deepening understanding of violence against women and of the strategies required for its elimination.

The 2007 Trust Fund grant-making cycle

20. The twelfth Trust Fund call was issued in 2007, targeting two critical areas of work to end violence against women. First, for the third year, the focus was on supporting the effective implementation of national laws, policies and plans of action on ending violence against women. The second area relates to the interlinkages between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. That window has been operational for three years, in collaboration with the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

21. As in previous years, the Trust Fund used an open and competitive process to invite proposals for the two grant-making windows. A total of 512 proposals were received, with requests totalling close to $105 million. Programme appraisal committees awarded nearly $5 million to 29 initiatives in 36 countries under both windows.[9] Albania, Cape Verde, Guinea, Maldives, Mozambique and Sierra Leone were first-time recipients.

22. Under the dedicated implementation window, the Trust Fund awarded $3.5 million in grants to 20 initiatives in 26 countries,[10] including 6 initiatives by central and local governments.[11] Many of the grantees are supporting the implementation of laws and policies aimed at ending domestic and sexual violence, whereas others focus on anti-trafficking efforts and the eradication of harmful practices and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. The following examples highlight select grantee initiatives under the 2007 implementation window:

(a) The district of Ngoma in the East Province of Rwanda will promote the implementation of Rwanda's Family Code and of national policies to end gender inequality and gender-based violence. The first baseline study on domestic violence and sexual violence will be undertaken in cooperation with national women's councils, and information on women's rights to protection and legal redress will be provided to community members through radio broadcasts, community dialogues

[9] See http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/trust_fund_grantees.php for a detailed list.

[10] Albania, Algeria, Argentina and Brazil (regional project), Cambodia, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Georgia, Guyana, Jamaica, Maldives, Mexico, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa (regional project also covering Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia), the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

[11] Cape Verde, Jamaica, Maldives, Pakistan, Rwanda and Papua New Guinea.

and conferences. Local leaders and authorities will also be sensitized to the importance of implementing laws and policies, resulting in a three-year plan of action for stakeholders at the district level;

(b) In Egypt, the Al Shehab Institution for Comprehensive Development will support the implementation of relevant Criminal Code provisions and the Ministerial Decree 261 of 1996 prohibiting female genital mutilation. The process of raising the awareness of legal professionals and executive officials with respect to women's rights and the legal grounds of gender equality is being targeted specifically at the ministries of Justice, the Interior and Social Solidarity, and at the National Council for Women, police departments, the judiciary, the legislative, the media, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations. The project will enhance the capacities of shelters, advocate for the establishment of monitoring bodies and empower women in vulnerable and marginalized communities in six Egyptian governorates;

(c) In Albania, Refleksione Association, in partnership with the Network against Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking, will support the development of councils against domestic violence — community-based, multisectoral referral systems to support survivors of domestic violence — in five districts. This is in support of the 2006 Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations, which provides for improving the coordination of the local-level response to domestic violence. The project will thus support the local capacities of 10 districts to monitor the implementation of the new domestic-violence law and the National Strategy on Domestic Violence, pending its adoption, as well strengthen women's legal literacy;

(d) In Jamaica, Women's Media Watch and the Bureau of Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports will partner to support the implementation of the 1996 Domestic Violence Act and the National Policy against sexual harassment, as well as regional and international women's rights conventions, including the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. To that end, the project will develop the capacities of stakeholders, including judges, magistrates and Government and private-sector employees, to implement those instruments and focus on reducing tolerance of violence against women among journalists, teachers, counsellors and community leaders. A public-education and awareness-raising campaign will be conducted through the media and other public forums;

(e) In Papua New Guinea, the Gender and Development Division of the Government's Department for Community Development will be supporting the implementation of criminal law outlawing marital rape and sexual assault. A national campaign will sensitize leaders, various professionals and community members to existing laws and the consequences of sexual violence. Programmes to support survivors will be piloted in one urban and one rural district, and village magistrates and law enforcement officers will be sensitized to the issue of sexual violence. A mass-media campaign will be implemented featuring respected men and women and reinforcing the message "no means no". The project will also advance changes in the training curricula of teachers, nurses and social workers, with a view to enhancing the identification of and support to women survivors of sexual violence.

23. As part of the 2007 grant cycle, nine initiatives were supported under the special window addressing the interlinkages between violence against women and HIV/AIDS with close to $1.3 million in 12 countries.[12] These initiatives focus on two key perspectives: reducing all forms of violence against women and girls as an effective means of HIV prevention; and preventing and reducing the stigma and violence that HIV-positive and AIDS-affected women and girls face by supporting their access to support services, treatment, human rights education and empowerment opportunities. Examples of 2007 grantees working on the linkages are:

(a) In Chibuto and Xai-Xai, two districts of the province of Gaza in southern Mozambique with a high prevalence of HIV, Forum Mulher, in partnership with the Government, will support the implementation of the National Plan on Advancement of Women (2007-2009) and the National Strategic Plan to Combat HIV/AIDS (2006-2009). The project is aimed at enhancing access to services by women survivors of violence through the development of standardized procedures for clinical, psychological, police and legal assistance. Community dialogue focused on changing harmful traditional beliefs and practices that increase women's and girls' risk of HIV infection will be strengthened by the participation of traditional and public-opinion leaders. A national men-to-men campaign will be launched to promote men's active participation in efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls as well as HIV;

(b) In implementation of a regional initiative, FEIM Argentina, with partners in Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, will undertake research on the intersection of violence against women and HIV/AIDS in those four countries, with a view to promoting public policies to address the twin pandemics. Qualitative and quantitative research methods will include interviews with women survivors of violence, public employees, civil society organizations and the academic community. On the basis of national reports that will be widely shared with the media, governments and women's networks, a regional report will be prepared and presented in the framework of the fifth Latin American and Caribbean Forum on HIV/AIDS and STDs, to be held in Peru in 2009. The project will also develop a communication strategy to disseminate its findings that will include the creation of a website.

Achievements of Trust Fund grantees

24. Trust Fund grantees working to support the implementation of laws and policies to end violence against women have achieved key results, including enhanced political will; strengthened institutional mechanisms and multi-stakeholder partnerships; and effected changes in practices at the country level. The following achievements are illustrative of grantee initiatives supported through the 2005 and 2006 calls:

(a) In the context of enhancing political will and establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships at national and community levels, in Mali, a multi-stakeholder coalition against female genital excision — involving the Ministry of Education, members of Parliament, mayors, community-level excision practitioners and traditional and religious leaders — has been set up and is advocating for

[12] Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mozambique, Peru and the Russian Federation, plus a regional project covering Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay.

anti-excision efforts. In Dominica, the establishment of multi-stakeholder committees in partnership with the Government and civil society and religious groups has helped to increase understanding of international human rights standards and enabled the pledging of commitments by each agency to a joint action plan;

(b) With respect to strengthening the administration of justice and improving women's access to justice, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, close cooperation among the Ministries of the Interior, Labour and Social Affairs, Centres for Social Care and non-governmental organizations is strengthening the effectiveness of investigations into and the prosecution of domestic violence under criminal law by prosecutors and investigating judges. In addition, a bylaw defining procedures for implementing and monitoring civil restraining orders has been adopted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In India, the Trust Fund grantee has worked to increase women survivors' access to justice by supporting a uniform interpretation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in partnership with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the National Commission for Women and the National Judicial Academy, at the central level. A related initiative at the decentralized level has supported grass-roots advocates in monitoring the implementation of India's Domestic Violence Act by traditional justice delivery systems (Nyaya Panchayats);

(c) Women and girls living in abusive situations require holistic responses to their particular sets of needs — hence the importance of developing a network of integrated services. Testing and scaling up interdisciplinary, intersectoral models of intervention are a priority in order effectively to prevent and mitigate the consequences of violence against women and girls. In Bulgaria, a local intervention model involving the police, the judiciary and service providers is being established to support women survivors of domestic violence, in accordance with the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence of 2005. Interdisciplinary teams of trainers have imparted skills to police officers, magistrates, lawyers and representatives of non-governmental organizations in four municipalities, and a monitoring system of court files and statistics has also been set up. Furthermore, linkages are being forged with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to support future collaboration and the financial sustainability of services for survivors of domestic violence. In Cambodia, a cadre of committed community advocates has reached out to communities and facilitated access to services by women survivors. Legal counselling for women survivors of intimate-partner violence and their abusive partners has empowered women to regain control over their lives and led to partners changing their violent behaviour;

(d) In connection with transforming discriminatory attitudes and practices, in Togo, data on different forms of widowhood rites has been generated and crucial links to HIV risk highlighted. Those findings were shared with stakeholders throughout the country, including traditional and religious leaders, non-governmental organizations, women's and widows' rights organizations and judicial institutions in order to advocate for joint action plans by local authorities and create alternative ceremonies so as to abolish widowhood rites. In Mali, as a result of a multi-stakeholder coalition, in the districts of Bamako (the capital), Yanfolia (Sikasso region), Kita (Kayes region) and San (Ségou region), religious leaders are now using their regular sermons to share information on practices to eliminate excision. In Zimbabwe, sustained sensitization processes have prompted

traditional leaders to agree to explore alternative practices, such as offering livestock to appease spirits, instead of women or girls.

25. Grantees under the special window to address the intersection of violence against women and HIV/AIDS have also invested in increasing women's access to services that address the twin pandemics, empowering women living with HIV and creating supportive communities. The following achievements are illustrative of grantees' initiatives supported through the 2005 call for proposals:

(a) In the context of empowering women survivors of violence, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti, survivors of sexual violence, including women living with HIV as a consequence of such violence, have increased access to medical care and voluntary HIV counselling and testing, including post-exposure prophylaxis. In India, the community of HIV-positive women has increased women's access to justice, property rights and livelihood opportunities through legal literacy training and dialogue with governments. The grantee's experiences are being taken to different districts in partnership with UNICEF;

(b) With respect to the creation of supportive communities, community outreach is a major aspect of grantee strategies and is essential for addressing societal norms and behaviours that fuel discrimination and violence against women and girls affected by HIV and AIDS. Grantees had collectively reached tens of thousands of community members through radio broadcast, the theatre and other means by the end of 2006. Engaging men was a particular focus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Nepal, as was working with teachers and students in Peru and Samoa.

UNIFEM programming under its 2004-2007 multi-year funding framework

26. In addition to administering the Trust Fund, UNIFEM identifies opportunities and supports innovative and catalytic strategies in its programming and partnerships to end violence against women. These efforts are supported through core and cost-sharing funds secured by UNIFEM (UNIFEM does not use Trust Fund resources for its programming). Four outcome-level results are pursued in programming aimed at ending violence under the UNIFEM 2004-2007 multi-year funding framework, whereby legislation and policies are formulated and implemented to promote and protect women's human right to be free from violence; mainstream institutions demonstrate the leadership, commitment, technical capacity and accountability needed to address violence against women; gender-equality advocates have the knowledge and are positioned to spearhead and transform policies, programmes and resource allocations to end violence against women; and there is a change away from harmful and discriminatory attitudes and practices that perpetuate violence against women.

Programming for effective laws and policies

27. UNIFEM has supported the introduction and strengthening of legislation against gender-based violence, including laws against domestic violence and rape and family law provisions, in for instance, Cameroon, Colombia, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Where efforts to reform laws and policies are at a preliminary stage, UNIFEM has supported reviews and assessments that have included, for example, a legislative review of national constitutions to assess compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination against Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as in partnership with UNICEF, a technical analysis of laws on the sexual abuse of children, in Barbados, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Support for the dissemination of recent laws on violence against women was provided, for example, in Brazil, Haiti and Morocco. In Brazil, UNIFEM partnered with the Supreme Court to produce a DVD on the 2006 "Maria da Penha Law" against domestic violence, with a view to reaching an estimated 15 million homes, or 40 per cent of Brazil's population, through a broadcast on public television channels. In Morocco, two radio and television broadcast campaigns popularizing new provisions of the country's Family Code, Labour Code and Penal Code have led to an increased demand for the services of crisis centres by women survivors of violence.

28. UNIFEM has provided support for multi-stakeholder input into national actions plans to end violence against women in Algeria, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Maldives, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. In Algeria, collaborative technical assistance by UNIFEM, UNFPA and UNICEF has contributed to the establishment of a National Gender-based Commission and the adoption in 2007 of a National Strategy to Combat Gender-based Violence. In Rwanda, UNIFEM and UNDP have partnered with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion to support the development of a national policy to address sexual and gender-based violence, a draft of which has been prepared for submission to Cabinet. In Maldives, UNIFEM supported the efforts of the Ministry of Family and Gender, in collaboration with multi-agency stakeholder involvement, to develop a draft action plan to implement the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the issue of violence against women as one of its priority areas. Enhancing women's participation in public security and urban planning with a view to ending violence against women in urban spaces is the focus of the "Safe Cities" regional programme, operating in select cities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia, with the support of UNIFEM in partnership with UN-Habitat. Building on a two-country pilot initiative supported by a Trust Fund grant made in 2003, that initiative has strengthened networks and participatory processes involving women's community groups and municipal authorities, resulting in joint proposals and action plans at the municipal level to strengthen urban security from a gender perspective, including measures such as improving lighting on streets and redesigning public squares.

29. The effective implementation of existing laws and policies to end violence against women requires the allocation of sufficient budgetary resources by Governments. UNIFEM has enhanced efforts to support gender-responsive budgeting in the context of ending violence against women, for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecuador, Mozambique and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In Mozambique, UNIFEM has been providing technical support to the Ministry of Interior to develop an action plan to end violence against women as well as advocating for budgetary allocations for the establishment of special police facilities to support women survivors of violence. In south-eastern Europe, UNIFEM has supported advocacy efforts to enhance the allocation of adequate resources to services for women survivors of domestic violence, including shelters, at the national level (in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and at the entity and local levels (in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Programming to strengthen mainstream institutional responses to violence against women

30. UNIFEM is working to develop the capacities of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations to promote and protect women's human rights, with a focus on law enforcement, the judiciary, parliamentarians, government ministries, armed forces, legal practitioners, academia and United Nations partners. In Zimbabwe, for instance, UNIFEM, in collaboration with UNFPA and UNICEF, supported training programmes for the judiciary, police forces, traditional leaders and the newly established Domestic Violence Council to enhance implementation of the new domestic violence law, building on earlier advocacy efforts that had informed the process of adopting the law. In East and South-East Asia, judges were trained on the issue of gender-based violence in the context of women's human rights, and a regional judicial colloquium for justices of supreme courts and appellate courts from seven countries was organized. Efforts to train police and to set up or strengthen specialized police units to intervene in cases of violence against women were supported in Cameroon, Jordan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the Sudan. In Jordan, UNIFEM, in partnership with the Family Protection Department and under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah, co-organized the first regional police training programme for law enforcement officials from 12 Arab States, which focused on police interventions in domestic-violence cases and techniques for interviewing women survivors. In partnership with UNDP, UNIFEM continued to support the operation of Rwanda's National Police Helpdesk, with a view to enhancing police capacities to prevent and rapidly respond to violence against women. UNIFEM and UNDP also developed a policy briefing paper on gender-sensitive police reform in post-conflict societies, which, building on both entities' experiences in developing the capacities of police services to respond to women's security needs, seeks to inform efforts to strengthen police responses to gender-based violence.

31. Responses to the pandemic of violence against women are being hampered by a lack of accurate data and statistics on its scope and prevalence. UNIFEM, in cooperation with governments, United Nations partners and civil society, is supporting efforts to strengthen the knowledge base on violence by enhancing improving the generation and use of data in, inter alia, Afghanistan, India, Jordan, Morocco, Rwanda, Slovakia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the seven countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. In India, UNIFEM, with funding from a private-sector partner — Pond's, a brand of Hindustan Lever Ltd. — supported the generation and publication of the first monitoring and evaluation report on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, which analyses emerging trends and highlights good practices arising in different States in the application of the law that entered into force in 2006. Also in India, support was provided to a study highlighting the structural and economic violence experienced by widows in the city of Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh. In Morocco, a country-wide network of 40 women's crisis centres has developed an innovative database system to generate and analyse data on violence. The resulting analytical research report has informed the advocacy of women's non-governmental organizations for a national prevalence study on violence and for effective legislation against domestic violence.

32. UNIFEM has also worked within the United Nations system to advocate for a consistently applied policy to address violence against women in post-conflict needs

assessments and responses to crises, including ongoing support to system-wide efforts to enhance the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). UNIFEM is a founding member of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, an initiative comprising 12 United Nations entities — the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, the Department for Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP and WHO, whose goal is to coordinate and enhance the response of the United Nations system to sexual violence in conflict, crisis and recovery situations. United Nations Action has three pillars: advocacy, country-level support for United Nations system action, and knowledge generation. UNIFEM plays a lead role in advancing United Nations Action advocacy to build awareness of and commitment to ending sexual violence in conflict situations through intergovernmental processes and institutions, including the Security Council. UNIFEM also has worked to integrate responses to sexual violence into post-conflict governance and peacebuilding tools and has increased joint funds for sexual violence prevention and response, in support of United Nations Action.

33. UNIFEM is also working to strengthen the inclusion of commitments to achieve gender equality and end violence against women in the work of United Nations country teams and in peacebuilding. For instance, in Serbia, UNIFEM, in collaboration with UNDP and other United Nations country team partners, has supported participatory research on violence against women that identified policy strengths and gaps and offers a capacity-development and advocacy tool for the United Nations system to end violence. In Timor-Leste, as part of efforts by United Nations country teams, training programmes on the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with special focus on gender-based violence, were undertaken.

Programming to strengthen the capacity of gender equality advocates working to end violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual violence and trafficking in women

34. As part of that programming, UNIFEM has cultivated existing and has built new strategic partnerships with leaders in parliaments, governmental bodies and civil society in, inter alia, Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Liberia, Morocco, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Uganda, Viet Nam and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In Liberia, for example, UNIFEM supported the Ministry of Gender and Development and the mobilization efforts made by women's organizations to promote the process of incorporating sexual and gender-based violence into the formulation of the country's poverty-reduction strategy and development plans for the period 2008-2011. In Sierra Leone, support was provided to rural women to advocate for the strengthening of the domestic violence draft law that was eventually adopted in 2007. In Rwanda, in partnership with UNDP, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians was supported in the preparation and submission of a bill on sexual and gender-based violence, which was passed by Parliament in October 2007. Support for efforts made by the Ministry of Gender of Uganda to catalyse national dialogue and engage other key ministries, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, has contributed to the development of a national policy and action plan on sexual and gender-based

violence. In Haiti, in partnership with UNFPA and UNICEF, support was provided to a national multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism bringing together State representatives, women's organizations and other civil society and international donor partners with a view to designing action plans to be piloted in two regions and to strengthening the provision of services to women survivors of violence.

35. UNIFEM has supported capacity development for service providers, for example in Egypt, where a network of pro bono lawyers at the National Women's Complaints Office, supported by UNIFEM, has assisted women survivors of violence in seeking legal redress. In Morocco, in partnership with UNFPA, a programme implemented by a country-wide network of counselling centres for women resulted in an increase in member organizations and a strengthened network and collective identity and also forged partnerships with the family law branches of the judiciary and other stakeholders. This model has been replicated in developing the capacities of a similar network in Algeria.

36. UNIFEM has also enhanced efforts to prevent violent attacks against women candidates running for public office in Sierra Leone and Kenya. In the latter country, this has included support for the launch of a rapid-response unit that provides security training and service referrals to women candidates. As part of its efforts to facilitate and enhance women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, in 2007 UNIFEM launched a large-scale six-country programme in Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda, with a view to integrating women's concerns, including the issue of sexual and gender-based violence, into peace agendas and enhancing community-level responses aimed at preventing and responding to such violence.

Programming to bring about changes in discriminatory practices

37. UNIFEM supported the mobilization of men and boys as key allies and advocates in the prevention of violence against women through multi-stakeholder campaigns, events and information, education and communication materials. This approach was taken, for example, in programmes to address masculinity and non-violent behaviour in India, Timor-Leste and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Other examples include Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, where UNIFEM spearheaded the development and implementation of a court-based perpetrator intervention programme, which, in the case of Saint Lucia, has been incorporated into the family courts' existing work. In Thailand, UNIFEM, in partnership with the Government, co-hosted a regional conference to identify strategies for engaging a critical mass of gender-sensitive men so as to eliminate violence and discrimination against women. In Rwanda, the partnership with the Rwanda Defence Forces, the National Police, the Forum for Activists against Torture and the Men's Resource Centre has generated new commitment at the highest level of the military in involving men in the work of ending sexual and gender-based violence.

38. UNIFEM has also supported round tables, panel discussions and theatre and multimedia campaigns during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaigns (25 November-10 December) in Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste and Uganda. For example, in Pakistan, UNIFEM

launched the first think tank on violence against women, bringing together United Nations, other multilateral and bilateral partners and non-governmental organizations to exchange information and define areas of cooperation, and it facilitated an inter-faith dialogue on violence against women among religious scholars from the world's five main religions. In collaboration with United Nations partners, UNIFEM has supported the publication of a regional report on violence against women, entitled "No more: the right to live a life free from violence in Latin America and the Caribbean", which was coordinated by ECLAC and, among other things, highlights the need to translate political will into sustainable human, financial and technical resources in order to end impunity and prevent and prosecute violence against women and protect the rights of women survivors. At United Nations Headquarters level, UNIFEM launched an Internet-based advocacy campaign, "Say 'no' to violence against women", supported by United Nations partners and civil society organizations, as well as campaign spokesperson Nicole Kidman, UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador.

Conclusions

39. Pervasive and ongoing violence against women across the globe fuels cultures of violence and undermines progress towards the goals of human rights, development and peace. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, in her recent report (E/CN.4/2006/61), has highlighted challenges in the application of the due-diligence standard, which tends to be limited to responding to violence against women when it occurs and is concentrated on legislative reform, access to justice and the provision of services. She highlighted the need for a greater focus on prevention, including the need to transform patriarchal gender structures and values that perpetuate and entrench violence against women.

40. To achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and to fulfil other key commitments that have been made to the world's women, it is critically important that the existing level of support provided to efforts to address violence against women be increased significantly, and that effective, innovative approaches be replicated on a larger scale.

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Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

Letter dated 13 November 2007 from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women

The 2007 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council was an historic event that laid the foundation for a renewed and strengthened Council. Most importantly, it implemented the vision of the 2005 World Summit by opening new avenues for its future work, particularly through the annual ministerial review and the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum. These new modalities will ensure that the Council remains the central mechanism for the follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits and will serve as mechanisms to step up efforts to bring the international community on track for meeting the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015.

I am pleased to inform you that the Council's inaugural annual ministerial review exceeded all expectations, particularly in that it provided increased focus on and solid content for the discussion of policies and efforts needed to strengthen and accelerate the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals relating to the eradication of poverty and hunger through the global partnership for development. The national voluntary presentations by Ministers of six developing countries, Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana, were particularly well received by all member States as they provided an excellent opportunity for knowledge-sharing and information exchange.

Five key policy messages emerged from these presentations. The first was that national development strategies are working but not at the pace required, that is, an acceleration and scaling-up of the implementation process is needed. Second, there is a need for the global partnership to be made more effective in all its dimensions. Third, the global economic environment should be made pro-development and pro-poor. Fourth, monitoring the implementation of commitments and accountability

* E/CN.6/2008/1.

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should be strengthened. Lastly, emerging threats, such as climate change and desertification, which are obstacles for the realization of these goals, must be urgently addressed.

A high number of countries, both developed and developing, have now volunteered to be reviewed by the Council at the 2008 substantive session, highlighting the Council's role as a convener of and central forum for the review of the internationally agreed development goals.

In addition, and as mentioned in my letter to you dated 22 October 2007 (see annex II), the Council, during its resumed substantive session last month, adopted a multi-year programme of work for the annual ministerial review, as recommended in General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the work of the Council. This will provide the Council with a solid workplan as well as the lead time needed by the subsidiary bodies and other relevant entities to enhance their contributions to the Council's work.

The launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum provided an opportunity for a stimulating dialogue on issues such as quality, quantity, coordination and impact of aid. This bodes well for the 2008 Development Cooperation Forum, which will once again bring together, at this unique global platform, all of the key actors to engage in a dialogue on key policy issues affecting development cooperation, with a view to coming up with proposals on how such cooperation can best promote implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

With regard to the other outcomes of the Council's 2007 substantive session, I would like to highlight some of the important proposals made by the Council that are of relevance to the functional commissions. A list of the resolutions adopted by the Council specifically calling for action by the functional commissions is annexed for your reference (see annex I).

Of these, I wish to draw your attention in particular to Council resolution 2007/29 on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16. In that resolution, the Council, inter alia, noted the completion by the functional commissions of the review of their working methods, also noted the decision by some of the subsidiary bodies to continue to review their methods of work, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, recognized the need to further enhance coordination and cooperation between the Council and its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies so as to allow the Council to carry out its crucial role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination more effectively and requested the functional commissions, regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council to continue contributing, in accordance with their respective mandates, to the work of the Council.

I would greatly appreciate it if the issues raised above could be brought to the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women for consideration and action, and I thank you for your continued assistance and collaboration in that regard.

(*Signed*) Dalius **Čekuolis**

Annex I

Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2007 requesting follow-up

A. Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2007 requesting follow-up by all functional commissions

Resolution number	*Title*
2007/2	The role of the United Nations system in providing full and productive employment and decent work for all
2007/29	Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in the light of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B

B. Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2007 requesting follow-up by the Commission on the Status of Women

Resolution number	*Title*
2007/7	Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

C. Resolution calling for action by all relevant entities of the United Nations system

Resolution number	*Title*
2007/33	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Annex II

Letter dated 22 October 2007 from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women

I am pleased to inform you that the Economic and Social Council last week adopted its first multi-year work programme for annual ministerial reviews. For the next two years, the annual ministerial reviews will focus on the following themes: 2008: "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development"; and 2009: "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health".

This is a major step forward in pursuance of the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the subsequent General Assembly resolution on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. The new multi-year work programme will ensure a degree of predictability in the themes of the annual ministerial reviews, which, in turn, will facilitate the full engagement of all entities of the Economic and Social Council system, as well as the mobilization of expertise required from member States, the United Nations system and other stakeholders.

On the substantive side, next year's theme of sustainable development, which encompasses the three pillars of economic growth, social development and environmental protection, provides an important opportunity for the United Nations system to promote the expeditious implementation of the commitment made in this area, in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This could also be utilized as an opportunity to look at the issue of climate change in the broader perspective of sustainable development, since the Economic and Social Council provides an appropriate platform for such deliberations, leading to the adoption of a ministerial declaration.

The substantive contributions of the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Economic and Social Council will be essential for the success of the reviews. The commissions will have an instrumental role in promoting an effective and coherent mobilization of support for the preparatory processes leading to the annual ministerial review of 2008.

I would therefore like to request the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council to support the annual ministerial reviews as a priority issue, in order to ensure their full engagement in and allow for adequate preparations for these reviews.

I look forward to working with you closely on this issue of great importance to the whole Economic and Social Council system.

(*Signed*) Dalius **Čekuolis**